●講談社コミックス●

福本伸行

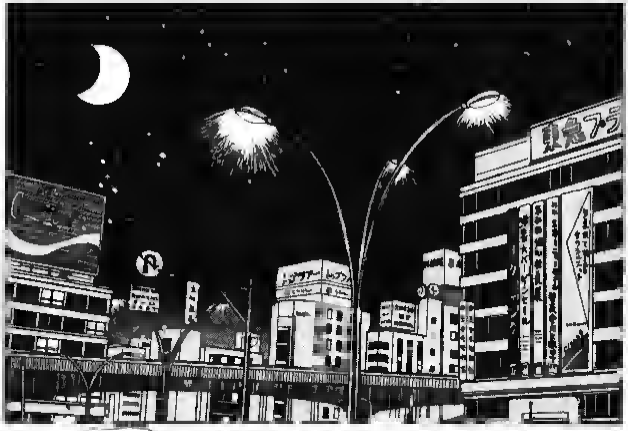
FUKUMOTO NOBUYUKI 2

天

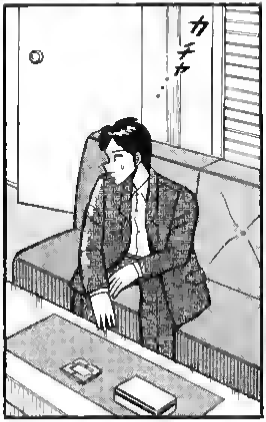
TEN

Kodansha Publishing Company

CHAPTER
11
OPEN-HEARTED



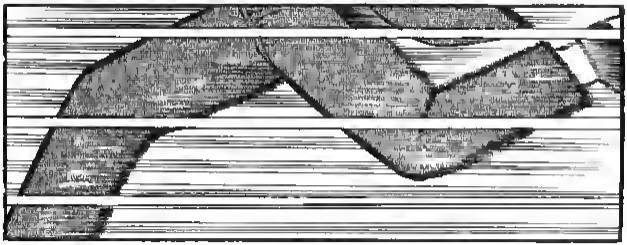
IN 3-CHOME NEAR BUILDING #17—
A PERSON HAS COLLAPSED SEND AN AMBULANCE RIGHT AWAY
THAT'S RIGHT... ON THE ROAD—
IN CHUUNO DISTRICT—
カチャ
HELLO? HELLO?
HELLO? AND YOUR NAME IS—?


カチャ

WHAT HAPPENED?
SA... SAWADA.
I CUT UP TEN...
GO OUT THE FRONT AND TURN RIGHT HE'S AT THE END OF THE ROAD...
RUN.
HUH?

SOONER OR LATER, THIS IS THE ONLY THING THAT COULD HAPPEN...
HE TRICKED ME——
WHY?
UH—— THAT'S——
RUN!
DON'T STAND AROUND JABBERING!
...S...SO YOU.....

HE COULD LOSE HIS LIFE .....
IF IT DOESN'T GO WELL FOR HIM TONIGHT .....
YOU IDIOT, HE DIDN'T... HOW COULD YOU... .....
YOU'RE SERIOUS!
バタン...
....



HEY, YOU, DON'T GET IN THE WAY!
WAIT A MINUTE!

A FRIEND! I'M COMING ALONG WITH HIM!
WHO ARE YOU?

TEN!!

TEN...

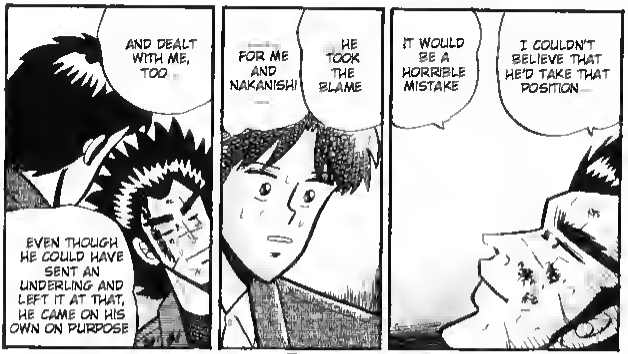
I DIDN'T KNOW IT WOULD COME TO THIS ...
NOT AT ALL

TEN!

I KNOW THINGS WENT WRONG
EVEN IF YOU CAN'T TALK
AH NEVER MIND!
ARE YOU OKAY?
I'M AN IDIOT AND THAT'S WHY I WAS FOOLED BY HIS SWEET-TALKING
I... MADE A MISTAKE WITH SAWADA
YOU'RE A LITTLE BIT WRONG
HIRO
YAKUZA ARE JUST YAKUZA.
HE'S A KIND PERSON...

YOU'VE ENTERED THE WORLD OF REP PLAYERS, HIRO— IT'S NOT A GOOD THING, BUT—
YOUR ONLY BIT OF GOOD FORTUNE WAS— THAT YOU MET THAT MAN, SAWADA
SO MUCH THAT
IT'S PRACTICALLY A MIRACLE— THAT HE'S A KIND PERSON

HE GAVE THE VICTORY TO ME...
SAWADA NOTICED...
MY TRICK.


AND DEALT WITH ME, TOO...
EVEN THOUGH HE COULD HAVE SENT AN UNDERLING AND LEFT IT AT THAT, HE CAME ON HIS OWN ON PURPOSE
FOR ME AND NAKANISHI
HE TOOK THE BLAME
IT WOULD BE A HORRIBLE MISTAKE
I COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT HE'D TAKE THAT POSITION...

IT'S JUST FOR SHOW
THESE SWORD WOUNDS ARE FLASHY, BUT SHALLOW
I SURVIVED
IF HE'D LEFT IT TO HIS UNDERLINGS HE WOULDN'T KNOW HOW BAD THE DAMAGE WOULD BE AND TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE WORST CASE
HE CARRIED IT OUT IN PERSON

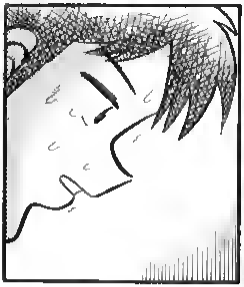
INCLUDING ALL OF THESE THINGS
SINCE IF WITNESSES COME FORWARD SOMEDAY, THEY'LL BE ABLE TO POINT HIM OUT TO THE POLICE
BUT...
THAT WAS REALLY DANGEROUS FOR SAWADA
THAT MAN'S WORSE OFF THAN ANY OF US.
SAWADA TOOK THE BLAME FOR EVERYTHING.

UNGH.
!
THUMP

TEN!?
THE LIFE-THREATENING INJURY WAS A WHACK TO THE HEAD...
A RANDOM ACCIDENT
JUST MY BAD LUCK...

I'D ALMOST LIKE TO THANK HIM...

EVEN IF I DIE, YOU CAN'T HOLD A GRUDGE AGAINST SAWADA...
...IT'LL ALL BE FINE NOW...
YEAH...

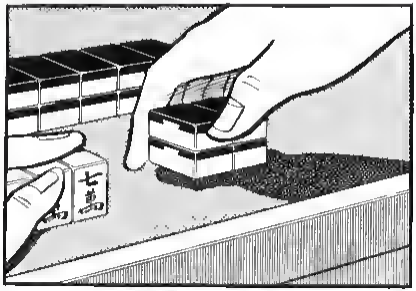


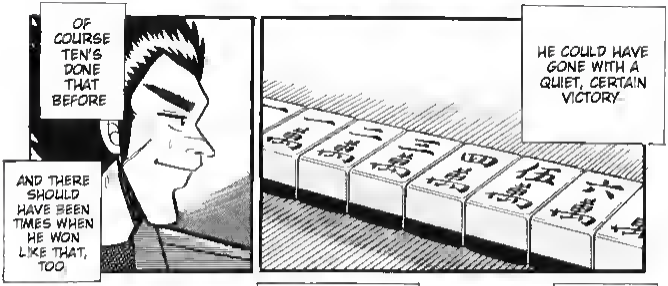
FOR A LONG TIME
... A RATHER LONG TIME
I FELL INTO
MAKING A LIVING BY
CHEATING PEOPLE.
THAT WAS... JUST MY BAD LUCK, TOO.
IT'S A MYSTERY HOW I MANAGED TO LIVE THIS LONG.

WHAT I'D THOUGHT WAS A MYSTERY ALL ALONG...

...TEN...

NOW... I FINALLY UNDER-STAND.

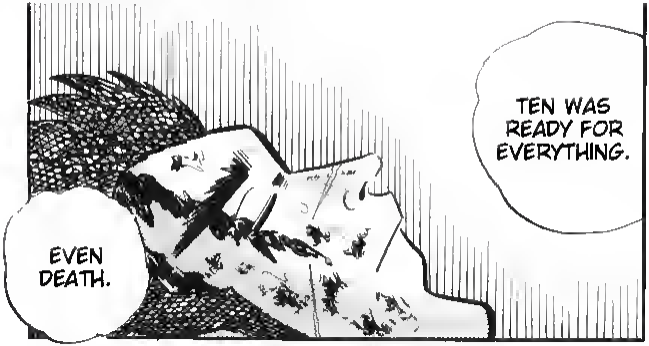

IF HE WAS A REAL PRO, THERE'S NO WAY HE'D USE A FLASHY WAY OF PLAYING LIKE THAT.
WHY DID TEN USE TENHOU CHUUREN-POUTOU TO END THE GAME?

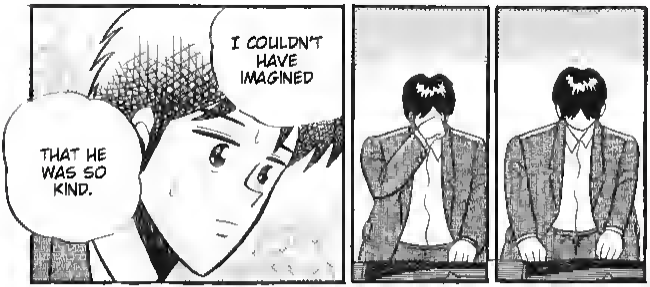

OF COURSE TEN'S DONE THAT BEFORE
AND THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN TIMES WHEN HE WON LIKE THAT, TOO.
HE COULD HAVE GONE WITH A QUIET, CERTAIN VICTORY.

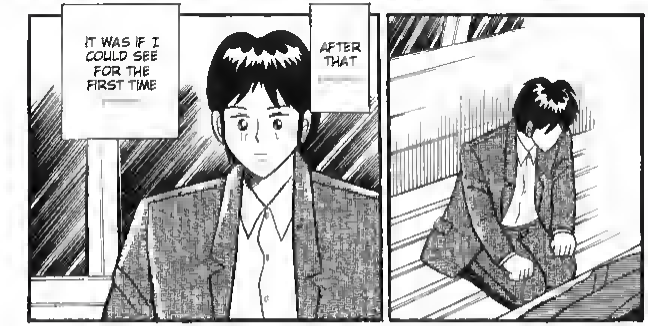
HE WON BY SOMETHING THAT WAS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD TO BE A TRICK, AND WAS PUNISHED FOR IT AFTERWARDS.
BUT AT SOME POINT, TEN ABANDONED THAT WAY OF WINNING.
HALF BEING HURT BY HIS OPPONENTS AND HALF WANTING TO BE HURT--!

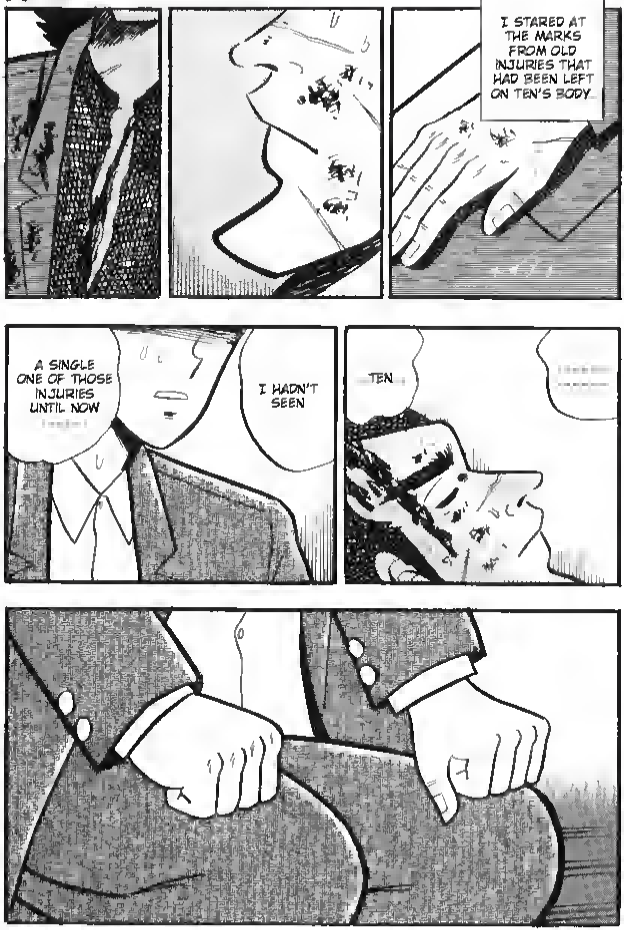
BOTH OF THEM HAD SUCH UNPLEASANT ROLES TO PLAY
AND ALONG WITH SAWADA, TOO HE TOOK THE TROUBLE TO SOIL HIS OWN HANDS AND WENT TO CUT UP TEN
FOR TEN'S SAKE
HE WANTED TO BE HIT BY BOTH AT THE SAME TIME
NOT JUST TEN... BUT SAWADA TOO.....
SO KIND TOWARDS OTHERS THAT THEY CAN ONLY HURT THEMSELVES.....

OF COURSE I'D LOSE...

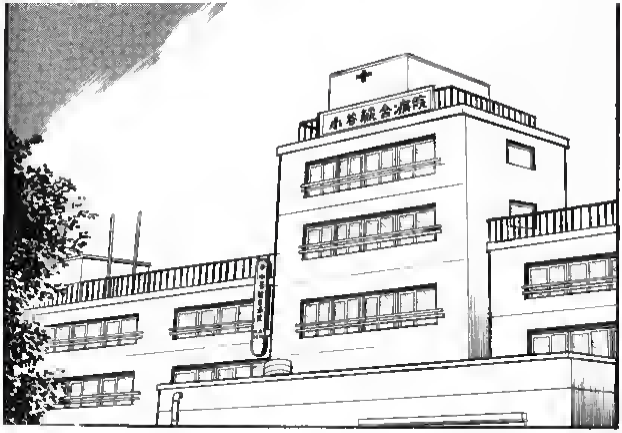

TEN WAS READY FOR EVERYTHING.
EVEN DEATH.


I COULDN'T HAVE IMAGINED
THAT HE WAS SO KIND.


IT WAS IF I COULD SEE FOR THE FIRST TIME
AFTER THAT


I STARED AT THE MARKS FROM OLD INJURIES THAT HAD BEEN LEFT ON TEN'S BODY.
A SINGLE ONE OF THOSE INJURIES UNTIL NOW
I HADN'T SEEN
TEN

天
CHAPTER
12
WHOLEHEARTEDLY


小谷総合病院

HE'S NOT THE KIND OF GUY THAT'D DIE LIKE THAT. HE'S THE TYPE THAT'D COME BACK TO LIFE EVEN IF YOU CRUSHED HIS HEAD.
RIGHT, RIGHT
I'M NOT GOING TO DROP DEAD THAT EASILY !!

I THOUGHT I'D COME TO SEE HOW YOU WERE DOING...
201
PFF

/ / / / / ...

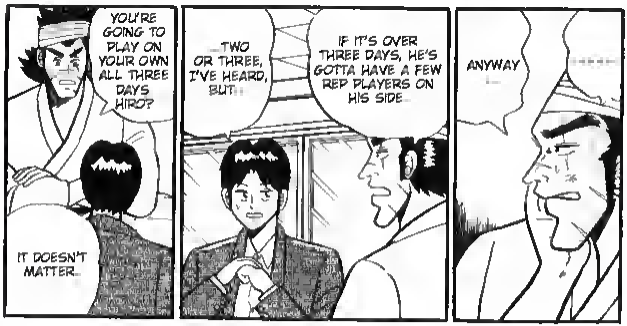
HIRO...
CITY
ヨボ…
SAWADA'S GOING TO BE HAVING A MATCH AGAINST THAT REAL-ESTATE RACKETEERING GUY, HUH?
I HEAR HE'S IN A PRETTY BAD SITUATION
HOW DID YOU HEAR THAT?
FROM SOME GUYS I USED TO ASSOCIATE WITH... WELL, THE INFORMATION GOT LEAKED TO ME.

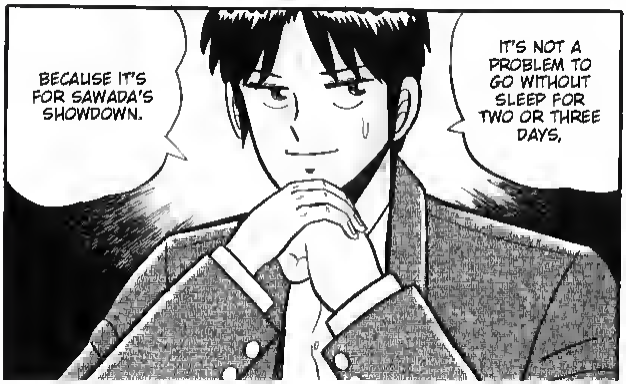
THANKS
OH.
HERE YOU GO
SORRY ABOUT THE TROUBLE
OH
TEN... I'M GOING TO GO OUT AND PICK UP A FEW THINGS
THE TRIGGER WAS THAT HE LOST AT THAT MAHJONG GAME HUH?
I BET
ギュ

IF HE WAS PROVOKED BY THAT MATCH...
SO SINCE HE FAILED TO DO THE WORK HE WAS CONTRACTED TO DO THIS TIME...
SAWADA COULDN'T BACK OUT OF THIS ONE AFTERWARDS
WASN'T JUST THAT THOSE TWO HAD GOTTEN ALL WORKED UP A WHILE AGO...
THE TRIGGER
WELL...
THE GAME IS TOTALLING THE POINTS FROM SIXTY SASHI-UMA REP PLAYER GAMES OVER THREE DAYS
YEAH...
MAH-JONG?
HMMM.
...BUT THEY'LL BE WORKING IT OUT SOON...
OH NO, HE DOESN'T HAVE THAT MUCH
SAWADA HAS THAT KIND OF CASH?!
THE RATE IS 1000 POINTS IS EQUAL TO 10,000 YEN, AND THE UMA IS ONE MILLION/ THREE MILLION

SAWADA WILL BE DESTROYED.
IF HE LOSES EVEN A LITTLE IT'LL PROBABLY BE IN THE BILLIONS...
TODAY IT'S ALREADY STARTED
WHEN'S THE MATCH?
THAT SLEAZEBAG!!
I BET THAT WAS HIS GOAL FROM THE START
SAWADA SAID HE WANTED TO PLAY ON HIS OWN, FIRST!
THEN WHY ARE YOU HERE RIGHT NOW
.....

DAMMIT
THERE'S NO WAY THAT SLEAZE WOULD STAND IN, HIMSELF, !
HE SAID IT WOULDN'T LOOK GOOD FOR US TO HAVE A REP PLAYING, IF THE MAN HIMSELF CAME TO STAND IN ON THE OTHER SIDE

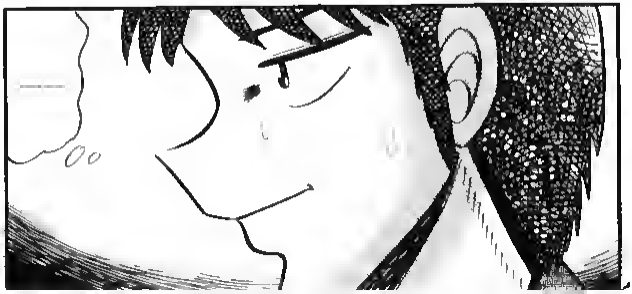

YOU'RE GOING TO PLAY ON YOUR OWN ALL THREE DAYS HIRO?
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
TWO OR THREE, I'VE HEARD, BUT
IF IT'S OVER THREE DAYS, HE'S GOTTA HAVE A FEW REP PLAYERS ON HIS SIDE
ANYWAY


BECAUSE IT'S FOR SAWADA'S SHOWDOWN.
IT'S NOT A PROBLEM TO GO WITHOUT SLEEP FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS,

I'VE NEVER BEEN FILLED WITH AS MUCH FERVOR TO WIN BEFORE, AS I AM THIS TIME.
UP UNTIL NOW, EVEN THOUGH I'VE BEEN ACTING AS A REP PLAYER, IT'S BEEN ON MY MIND A BIT
WHEN I THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO'VE HAD IT ROUGH BECAUSE OF ME...

SAWADA SAID IT TOO, BUT IT'S IMPORTANT... I CAN'T LOSE AGAIN!
I HAVE TO SEIZE THE TWO OR THREE BILLION THAT MAN'S BEEN SAVING UP, NO MATTER WHAT.
I HAVE TO GET REVENGE FOR THE PEOPLE THAT WERE DESTROYED BY HIM.

THIS TIME I HAVE TO KILL THAT LAND-SPECULATING BASTARD! I HAVE TO WIN, NO-HOLDS-BARRED.



7 PM

RESTAURANT SANKAGETSU
HIROYUKI!
AH HIROYUKI!

HE'S OVER THERE NOW...
WHERE'S SAWADA?
RIGHT...
WE'VE BEEN WAITING...
THE REP IS THE PLAYER ACROSS FROM HIM...
SO WHICH ONE IS HE...?
HE'S HAVING A PRETTY HARD TIME AGAINST THAT REP PLAYER OVER THERE.

ゲラゲラ…
SAWADA
UH-OH, SORRY THERE…
ピシッ
GH…
NOW DON'T MAKE AN ANGRY FACE LIKE THAT, SAWADA
BUA HA HA HA
IT'S AN AUTOMATIC TABLE, SO IT'S NOT LIKE THERE'S ANY CHEATING

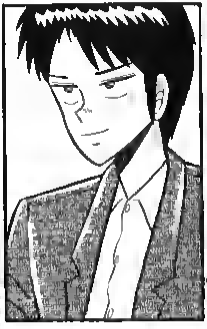
JUST STAY ON TRACK, HA HA HA
SINCE I'M SPARING NO EXPENSE TO PAY YOU ON COMMISSION
SURE THING.

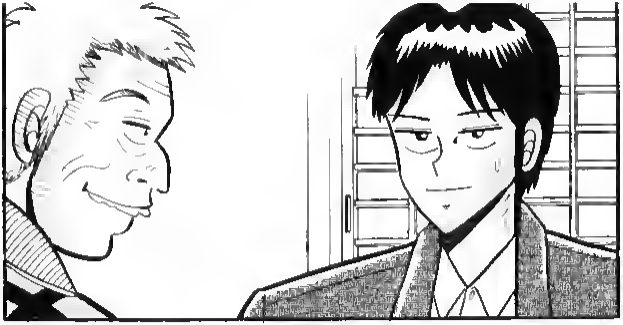
GUAHAHAHA, WELL DONE, WELL DONE!

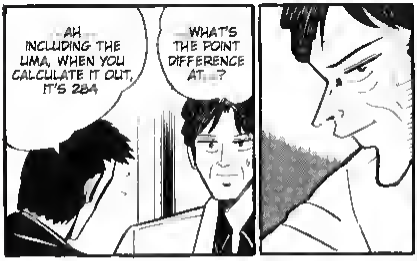
I'M FINISHED HERE EITHER WAY.
SURE
THAT'D BE GOOD.
JUST LEAVE IT TO ME

LET'S SWITCH OFF, SAWADA
HIRO!

I'VE HEARD RUMORS ABOUT YOU
HEH HEH SO THE REAL PLAYER'S FINALLY COME TO THE TABLE, HUH?



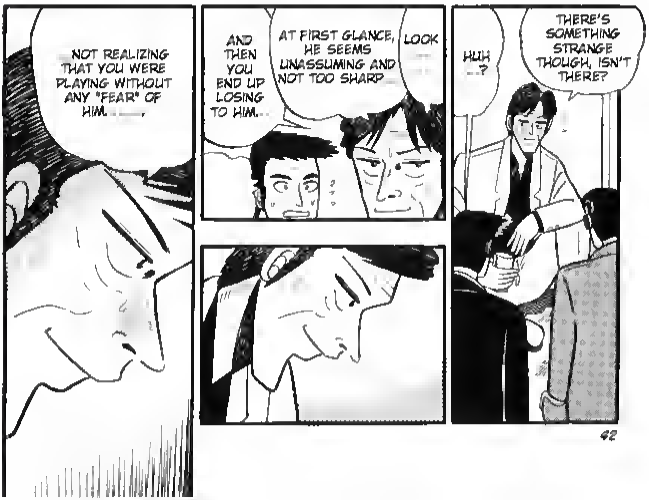


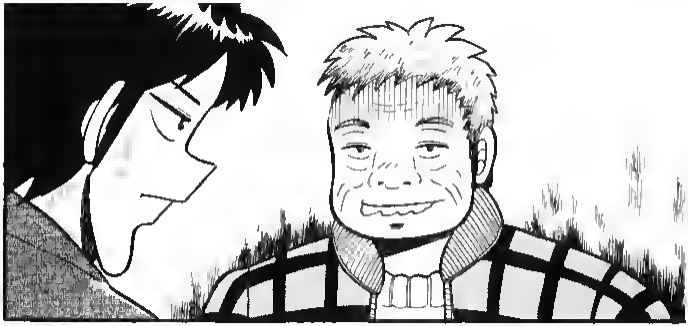

AH, INCLUDING THE UMA, WHEN YOU CALCULATE IT OUT, IT'S 284
WHAT'S THE POINT DIFFERENCE AT...?

WELL DON'T BE TOO HARD ON ME
ログフ：
PHEW
YOU DID A GOOD JOB

THAT'D BE ENOUGH TO CRUSH A PENNILESS YAKUZA LIKE ME
IT'S A GOOD THING IT'S A THREE-DAY MATCH
HEH HEH 28 MILLION, THEN

チラ
ア！！


...NOT REALIZING THAT YOU WERE PLAYING WITHOUT ANY "FEAR" OF HIM.
AND THEN YOU END UP LOSING TO HIM...
AT FIRST GLANCE, HE SEEMS UNASSUMING AND NOT TOO SHARP...
LOOK...
HUH...?
THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE THOUGH, ISN'T THERE?



SURE. HE GOT THAT A LOT, BOSS CHII-TOI-TSU HANDS THAT YOU DEALT INTO BUT...

OTHER-WISE NOTHING

HUH?

ANYTHING ABOUT HIS CHII-TOI-TSU ...?

DIDN'T YOU NOTICE ANYTHING FROM SITTING ON THE SIDE?

NO, NOT AT ALL!

CHII-TOI-TSU

FOR HIM

BUT IT CAN'T BE JUST THAT

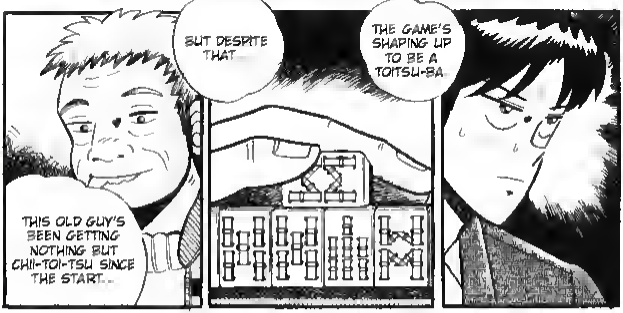
THAT'S HIS HABIT

GETTING THAT KIND OF HAND

SOMEHOW YOU JUST ENDED UP HOLDING THE TILE HE NEEDED IN YOUR HAND

YOU WERE UNLUCKY, BOSS

HEH HEH


THIS OLD GUY'S BEEN GETTING NOTHING BUT CHII-TOI-TSU SINCE THE START...
BUT DESPITE THAT...
THE GAME'S SHAPING UP TO BE A TOITSU-BA.

THAT'S A BIT MUCH...
EVEN THOUGH IT'S A TOITSU-BA KIND OF ROUND THE WHOLE TIME...

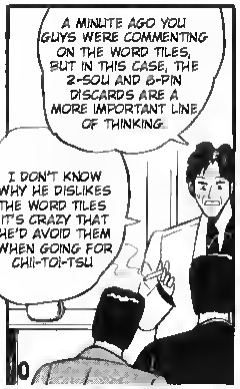
SOUTH 1ST ROUND
HIROYUKI'S HAND
キュッ
8TH TURN
HIROYUKI'S HAND
カミッ
—SEVEN PAIRS AGAIN?..
FROM THE OLD GUY'S DISCARDS
12TH TURN

HIROYUKI'S HAND
OPPOSITE PLAYER'S DISCARDED TILES
THAT'S THE ONE
OH
HE HAD A NORMAL HAND, BUT WAS PRETENDING IT WAS CHII-TOI-TSU ...?
... OH SHIT .....!

BEFORE DECLARING RIICHI, HE DISCARDED XIA, PEI, 2-SOU, 8-PIN
CHII-TOI-TSU WAITING ON A 2-MAN!?
HUH ...?
HOW
THIS IS,
BUT WHY CALMLY DISCARD THE XIA AND PEI, AND WAIT ON SOMETHING LIKE THE 3-MAN?
IT'S LIKE HE PREDICTED HE'D DISCARD THE 3-MAN...
THIS HAS BEEN HAPPENING A LOT- THE OLD GUY GETS A HAND WHERE HE'S WAITING FOR ONE OF OUR LEFTOVER TILES
AGAIN
THAT OLD GUY... HE DID PREDICT IT
IT'S NOT 'LIKE' HE DID IT.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

HUH?


A MINUTE AGO YOU GUYS WERE COMMENTING ON THE WORD TILES, BUT IN THIS CASE, THE 2-SOU AND 8-PIN DISCARDS ARE A MORE IMPORTANT LINE OF THINKING.
I DON'T KNOW WHY HE DISLIKES THE WORD TILES IT'S CRAZY THAT HE'D AVOID THEM WHEN GOING FOR CHII-TOI-TSU

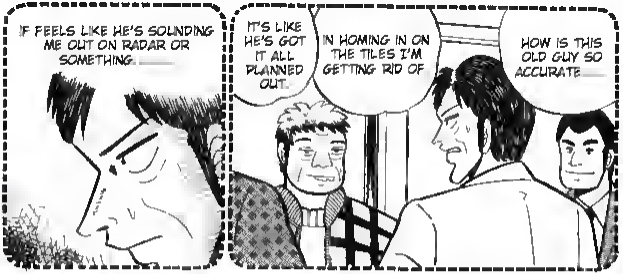
SINCE HIROYUKI'S NOT AN IDIOT EITHER... HE'LL FIGURE OUT THAT 3-MAN WAIT SOON

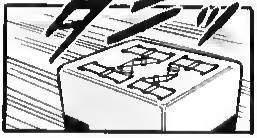
I PLAYED THAT OLD GUY IN FIVE HAN-CHAN SESSIONS
HE'S GOT A REASON FOR THAT 3-MAN WAIT

THERE HAS TO BE A REASON!
THERE'S NO WAY HE'D WAIT ON SOMETHING LIKE THE 3-MAN
3-MAN AND 7-MAN ARE KEY NUMBER TILES. THERE'S A HIGH PROBABILITY THAT THEY'LL BE USED UP IN PEOPLE'S HANDS
MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHY NOT THE 2-SOU OR THE 8-PIN INSTEAD OF THE 3-MAN? THAT'S MUCH MORE MYSTERIOUS
A HINT THAT HE MIGHT TAKE THAT TILE
ON THE 8TH TURN A LITTLE WHILE AGO, HIROYUKI SHOWED
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE TILES THE OLD GUY DISCARDED.
THAT REASON IS
THE INSTANT HE THOUGHT ABOUT TRYING TO RUN WITH AN OPEN TAN-YAO... HE HESITATED.
HIROYUKI, THE DEALER, COULD HAVE TAKEN THE 4-MAN FROM SHIM-CHA
I'M AROUND 100% SURE I'D OVERLOOK THAT IF I WAS PLAYING NORMALLY... A TINY LITTLE CHANGE
BUT YOU SEE, I CAN SEE THIS KIND OF THING BECAUSE I'M WATCHING HIROYUKI'S HAND FROM BEHIND

THE 3-MAN WOULD COME OUT OF HIS HAND
三萬
伍萬
六萬
七萬
I DON'T NEED TO EXPLAIN ANYTHING BEYOND THAT...
ON THE HINT THAT HIROYUKI WANTED TO TAKE THAT TILE, THE OLD GUY PREDICTED HIROYUKI'S HAND HAD THE SHAPE 3-5-6-7
WITH THE OTHER TILES IN A TWO-SIDED WAIT OR SOME OTHER STRUCTURE...
SHIT.
HIROYUKI NOTICED TOO
IT LOOKS LIKE HE DID.

THAT'S AS FAR AS I CAN READ HIM... FOR THE MOST PART, THERE WERE NO CLUES HE GAVE OFF TO PREDICT HIM BY...
JUST
I CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL AROUND THIS GUY...
IT'S... AS I THOUGHT


IF FEELS LIKE HE'S SOUNDING ME OUT ON RADAR OR SOMETHING...
IT'S LIKE HE'S GOT IT ALL PLANNED OUT...
IN HOMING IN ON THE TILES I'M GETTING RID OF
HOW IS THIS OLD GUY SO ACCURATE...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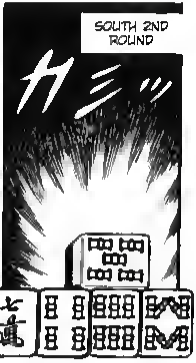
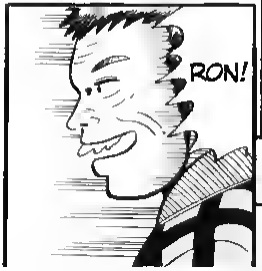
HE CAN'T PREDICT THIS LEFT-OVER TILE ON THE 7TH TURN
GET RID OF THE 8-SOU AND I'M IN TENPAI


SOUTH 2ND ROUND
カニッ


RON!

CHII-TOI-TSU!
WAITING ON AN 8-SOU?
EVEN ON THE 7TH TURN
ON THIS DISCARD
THERE WAS NO HINT I WAS GOING TO TAKE SOMEONE'S TILE THIS TIME
WHY HOW
ON MY UNUSED TILES
IS IT A COINCIDENCE ...?
..... OR SOMETHING ELSE.....?
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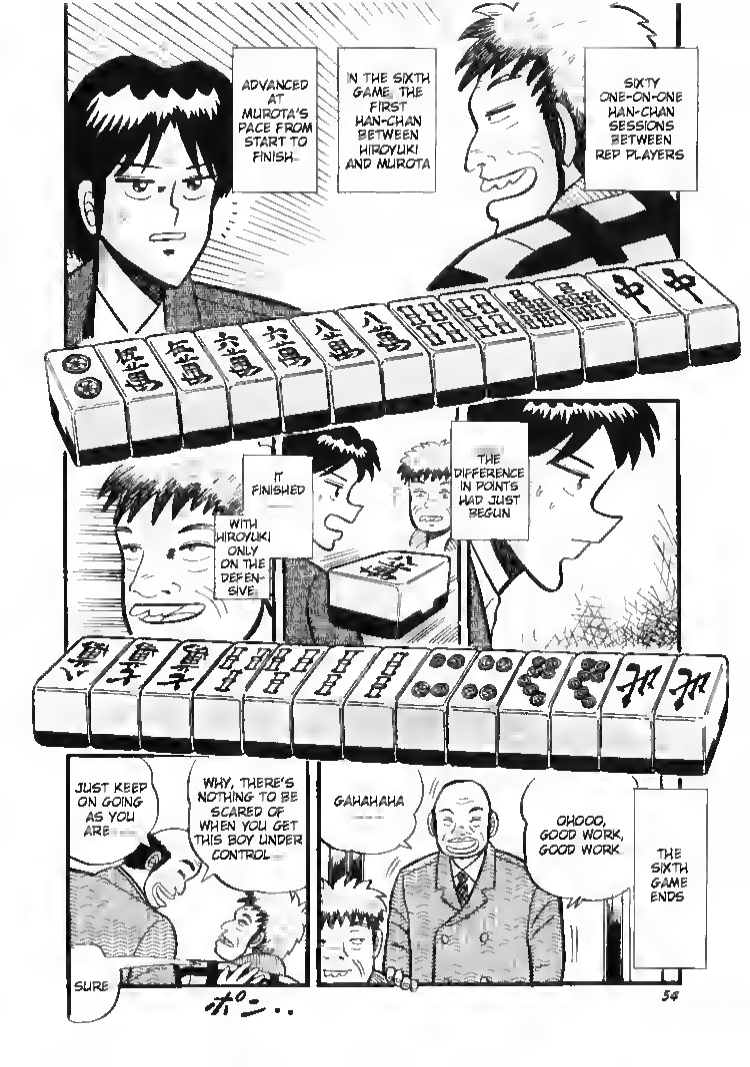
CHAPTER 13
NEW FROM OLD


ADVANCED AT MUROTA'S PACE FROM START TO FINISH
IN THE SIXTH GAME, THE FIRST HAN-CHAN BETWEEN HIROYUKI AND MUROTA
SIXTY ONE-ON-ONE HAN-CHAN SESSIONS BETWEEN REP PLAYERS
IT FINISHED WITH HIROYUKI ONLY ON THE DEFENSIVE
THE DIFFERENCE IN POINTS HAD JUST BEGUN
JUST KEEP ON GOING AS YOU ARE
WHY, THERE'S NOTHING TO BE SCARED OF WHEN YOU GET THIS BOY UNDER CONTROL
SURE
GAHAHAHA
OHOOO, GOOD WORK, GOOD WORK
THE SIXTH GAME ENDS

YOU TAKE CARE OF MUROTA FOR ME
I'M LEAVING MY SEAT AGAIN, BUT
YESSIR

YESSIR
MASAKI

NOW THEN, I HAVE TO BE GOING FOR A BIT

SAWADA
WELL, I'LL BE OFF

ENDED WITH HIROYUKI IN A BAD POSITION. MUROTA TOOK THE LEAD, WITH HIROYUKI IN THIRD
IN THE END, THIS HAN-CHAN

GIVE US ABOUT TEN MINUTES
MUROTA

グフフ

HIRO

REST BREAK. MUROTA'S SIDE
HEH HEH
IT'S JUST LIKE TAKING CANDY FROM A BABY, ISN'T IT?
THE CHAIRMAN SAID IT TOO, BUT
IT'S JUST LIKE WE EXPECTED FROM YOU.
PHEW
THAT'S NOT THE CASE AT ALL, REALLY
NO, NO
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING HOW HE EVALUATES MY CHI-TOI-TSU
HEH HEH HEH
THE NEXT HAN-CHAN MIGHT BE A LITTLE MORE SCARY
HE'LL COME BACK AROUND TO COUNTER-ATTACK
A LOSS IS A LOSS BUT HE'S NOT JUST LOSING
THAT HIROYUKI KID
HE'S WATCHING CLOSELY HOW I PLAY

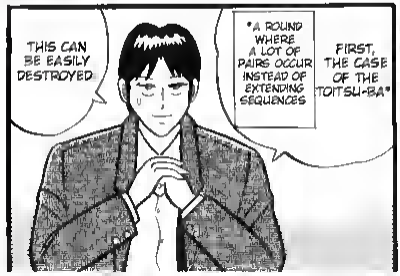
HOW WAS IT, TRYING TO PLAY AGAINST HIM?
...

SAWADA AND HIROYUKI'S SIDE

HE'S DEFINITELY AN AMAZING PLAYER...
YEAH

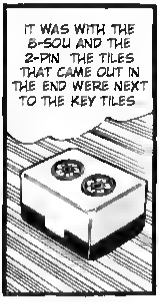
?

THERE COULD BE A NUMBER OF WAYS TO UNMASK THE TRICK TO IT, COULDN'T THERE...?
JUST EVEN WITH THAT MAN'S CHII-TOI-TSU


THIS CAN BE EASILY DESTROYED
*A ROUND WHERE A LOT OF PAIRS OCCUR INSTEAD OF EXTENDING SEQUENCES
FIRST, THE CASE OF THE TOITSU-BA*

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT——
HEH HEH——
SAWADA WHEN YOU WERE PLAYING DID YOU GET THE FEELING THAT—, YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO EXTEND AN END MIDDLE WAIT OR SIMPLE END WAIT?
HUH .?
PER-HAPS——?
HE ALWAYS PUTS A NUMBER OF TILES IN AT THE VERY END
WHEN HE PUTS TILES INTO THE AUTOMATIC TABLE—
MUROTA IS THE CAUSE——
IT'S INEVITABLE THAT IT TURNS INTO A TOITSU-BA!
WITHOUT THE 3 AND 7, NATURALLY IT BECOMES HARD TO COMPLETE SEQUENCES——
DON'T COUNT ON THE SHUFFLING OF THE AUTOMATIC TABLE
THERE'S A HIGH PROBABILITY THAT THE 3 AND 7 ARE STACKED TOGETHER IN THE WALL
FORTIFYING THE INSERTION OF THE 3 AND 7 KEY TILES WITH 67 OTHERS——

BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT IT IS IF MUROTA IS KILLING THE 7-SOU, 3-PIN, AND THE REST OF THEM.
BECAUSE CHII-TOI-TSU WAITS ON A SINGLE TILE WHEN YOU DEAL INTO HIS HAND IT LEAVES THE IMPRESSION HE CAN ENTIRELY PREDICT THE ONE IT WILL BE
SHOULDN'T THAT BE THE BEST PLACE FOR HIM TO WAIT——?

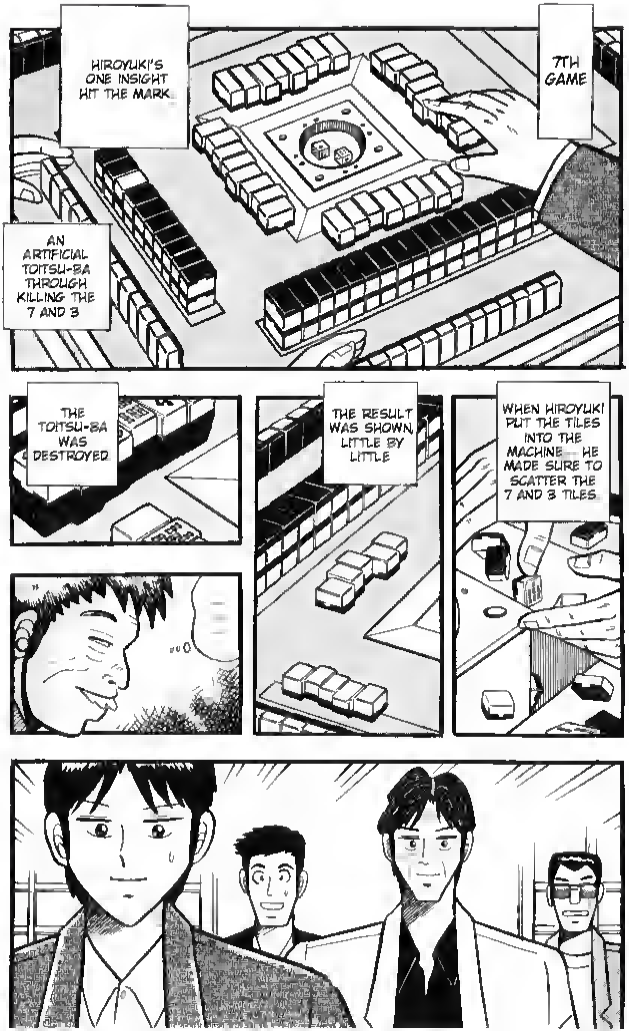

IT WAS WITH THE 8-SOU AND THE 2-PIN THE TILES THAT CAME OUT IN THE END WERE NEXT TO THE KEY TILES

DO YOU KNOW WHY CERTAIN TILES ARE COMING OUT OF PEOPLE'S HANDS? I DEALT INTO HIS HAND TWICE, BUT
AND THEN HE APPLIES THAT!

I'LL GET A CHANCE AT VICTORY IN THE NEXT HAN-CHAN!
IT'S NOT PERFECT, BUT I SHOULD HAVE SQUASHED THE MAIN PART OF THE PROBLEM

YEAH

I CAN DO IT, SAWADA
IT'S OKAY

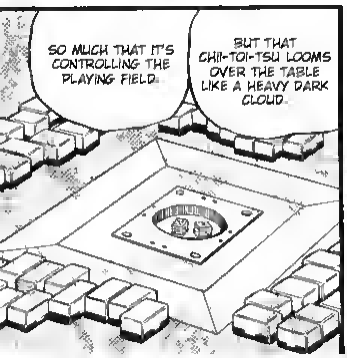

HIROYUKI'S ONE INSIGHT HIT THE MARK.
7TH GAME
AN ARTIFICIAL TOITSU-BA THROUGH KILLING THE 7 AND 3
THE TOITSU-BA WAS DESTROYED.
THE RESULT WAS SHOWN, LITTLE BY LITTLE
WHEN HIROYUKI PUT THE TILES INTO THE MACHINE, HE MADE SURE TO SCATTER THE 7 AND 3 TILES.

SURE, IT'S A FEW TIMES EASIER TO FIGHT HIM COMPARED TO BEFORE
YEAH
SAWADA, I BET HIS OPPONENT'S GETTING FEWER PAIRS TOO
ヒソ

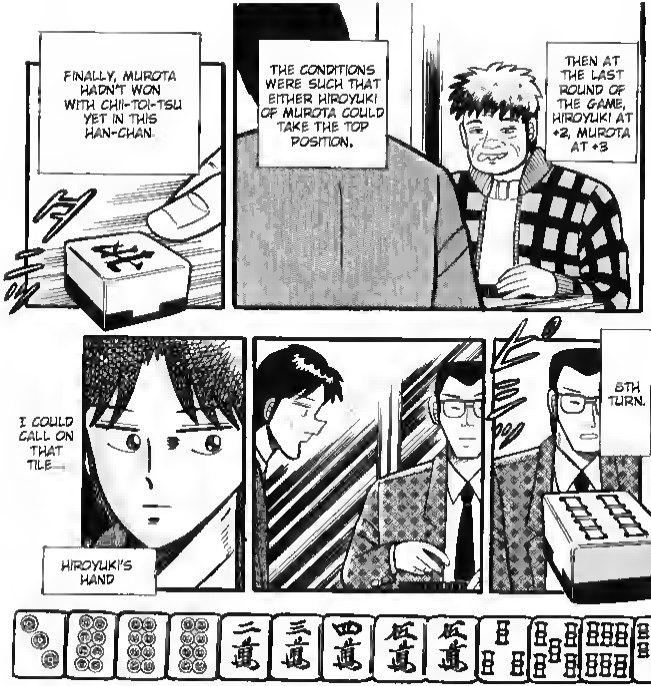
HIROYUKI KNOWS IT TOO
MUROTA'S GOAL OF A SINGLE-POINT WAIT COULD BE LINGERING
HE CAN'T WIPE AWAY THAT FEELING

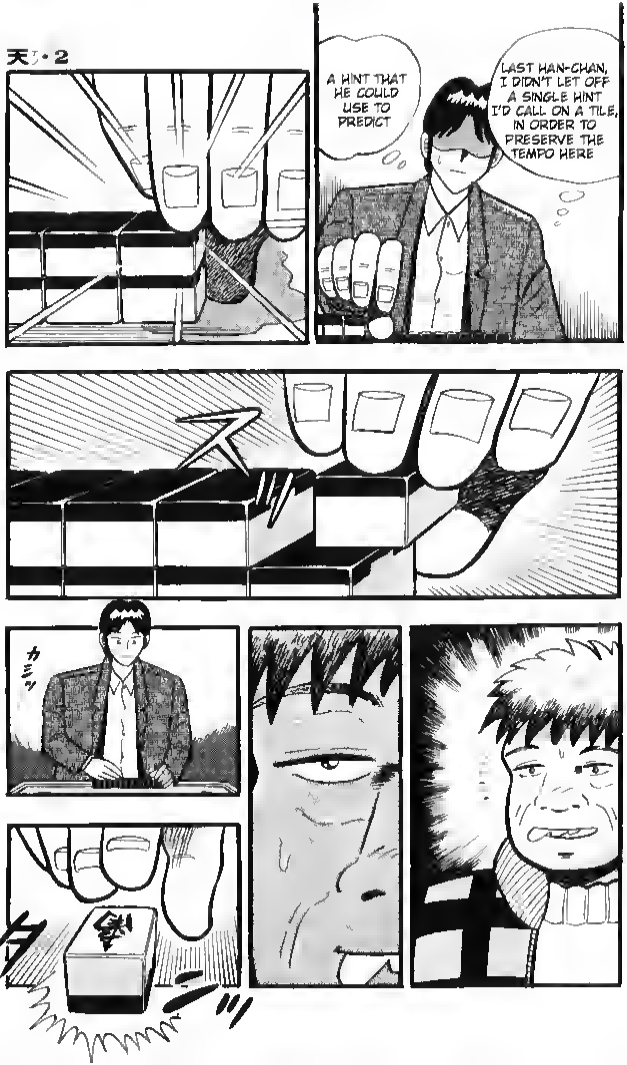
I CAN'T SHAKE THAT FEELING
HE'S STILL AIMING FOR ONE OF THE TILES COMING OUT OF HIROYUKI'S HAND
THAT HE'S SQUEEZING IN ON A VITAL POINT, LITTLE BY LITTLE

BUT A TOUGH BATTLE IS A TOUGH BATTLE

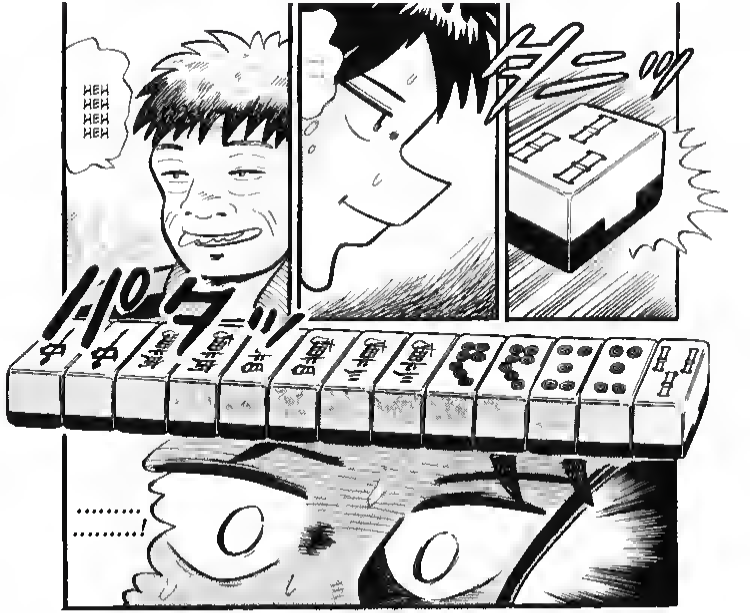

SO MUCH THAT IT'S CONTROLLING THE PLAYING FIELD
BUT THAT CHII-TOI-TSU LOOMS OVER THE TABLE LIKE A HEAVY DARK CLOUD

THIS ROUND, MUROTA HASN'T COME FORWARD WITH CHII-TOI-TSU YET
WITH THIS KIND OF PLAYER


FINALLY, MUROTA HADN'T WON WITH CHII-TOI-TSU YET IN THIS HAN-CHAN.
THE CONDITIONS WERE SUCH THAT EITHER HIROYUKI OF MUROTA COULD TAKE THE TOP POSITION.
THEN AT THE LAST ROUND OF THE GAME, HIROYUKI AT +2, MUROTA AT +3
I COULD CALL ON THAT TILE...
HIROYUKI'S HAND
8TH TURN.
MY DRAW MOVEMENT SHOULD BE SMOOTH
IT'S OKAY, I DIDN'T DROP TEMPO.
I'LL PASS ON IT


A HINT THAT HE COULD USE TO PREDICT
LAST HAN-CHAN, I DIDN'T LET OFF A SINGLE HINT I'D CALL ON A TILE, IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE TEMPO HERE
カシッ

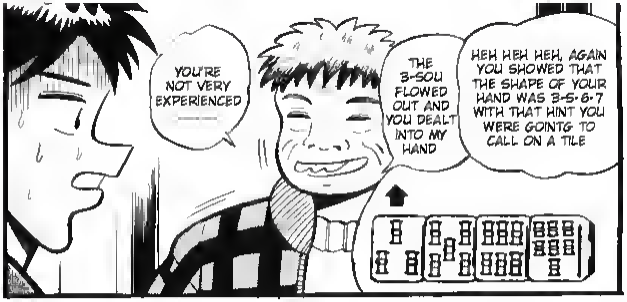
HE SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GUESS THAT I WAS THINKING ABOUT CALLING ON IT...
IT'S OKAY... THERE WEREN'T... ANY UNNATURAL MOVEMENTS...
THERE'S NO WAY HE REALIZED IT...
10TH TURN
THAT'D BE A TOTALLY SUPERHUMAN ABILITY...
THIS TIME I DIDN'T GIVE HIM A HINT TO PREDICT MY HAND WITH...
HE WOULD HAVE AIMED FOR THIS DISCONNECTED 3-SOU BEFORE BUT...
THOUGH IF HE COULD PEEK INSIDE MY MIND, IT WOULD BE A DIFFERENT STORY...
I DECIDED TO NOT CALL ON THE 4-SOU AND FROM THE 3-5-6-7, THE 3-SOU COMES OUT...
DISCARD THE 3-SOU AND I'M IN TENPAI


HEH HEH HEH HEH
ハロー!!
.....!

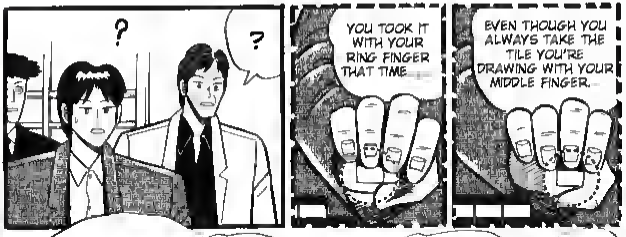
HIRO
HEH HEH HEH HEH

WHY?
CHII-TOI-TSU WAITING ON A 3-SOU?

THIS MAN


YOU'RE NOT VERY EXPERIENCED
THE 3-SOU FLOWED OUT AND YOU DEALT INTO MY HAND
HEH HEH HEH, AGAIN YOU SHOWED THAT THE SHAPE OF YOUR HAND WAS 3-5-6-7 WITH THAT HINT YOU WERE GOINTG TO CALL ON A TILE

SHOULD I TELL YOU HOW I FIGURED IT OUT .....?
HEH HEH .....


?
?
YOU TOOK IT WITH YOUR RING FINGER THAT TIME...
EVEN THOUGH YOU ALWAYS TAKE THE TILE YOU'RE DRAWING WITH YOUR MIDDLE FINGER...

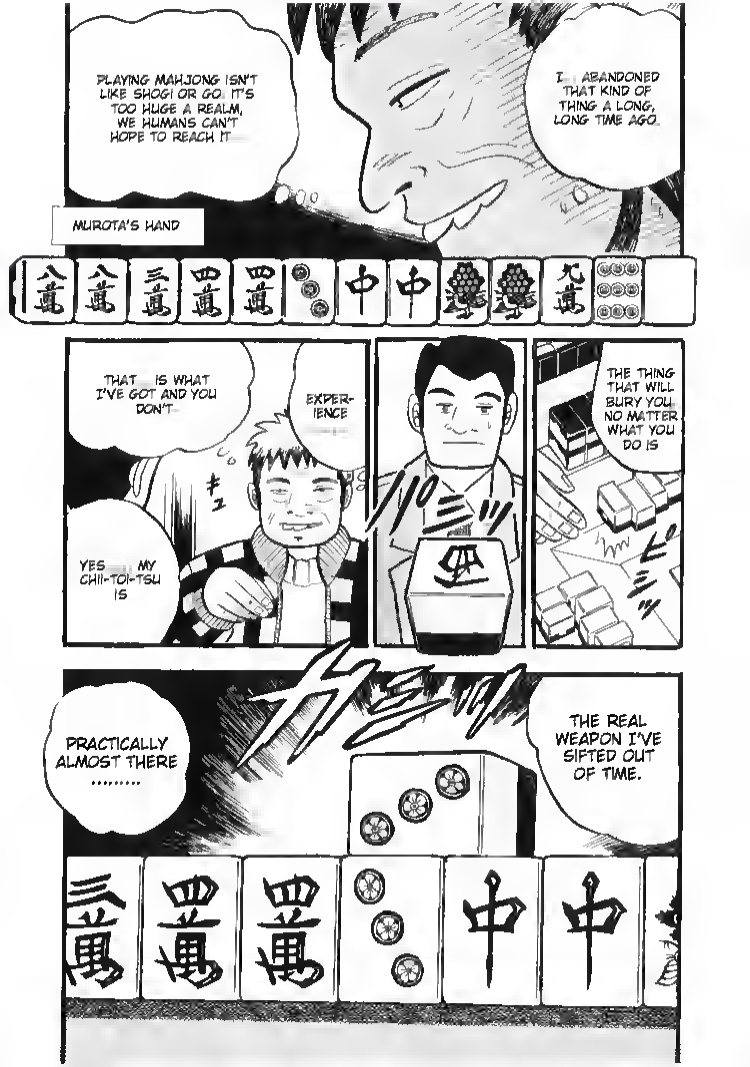
I DIDN'T SENSE ANY CHANGE... SURE SO FAR YOU'D BEEN HIDING IT PERFECTLY
YOU WENT TO DRAW SMOOTHLY FROM THE WALL...
THAT TIME YOU TRIED TO ERASE THE HINT THAT YOU WANTED TO CALL ON IT AT...
YOU NEED ME TO EXPLAIN, HUH?
JUST...

WHILE THEY'RE FOLLOWING IT... BUT YOU MOVE AT THE SAME TIME
WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENS WITH THE TILE YOU TRY TO DRAW——?
NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, YOUR EYES END UP FOLLOWING IT FOR AN INSTANT.
BECAUSE THE TILE YOU WANTED CAME OUT
YOUR EYES TOLD THE LIE...
AND YOU DRAW THE TILE NOT WITH YOUR MIDDLE FINGER, BUT WITH YOUR RING FINGER...
YOU FAIL TO GRASP IT IN THE MIDDLE... IT FLOWS TO THE LEFT...

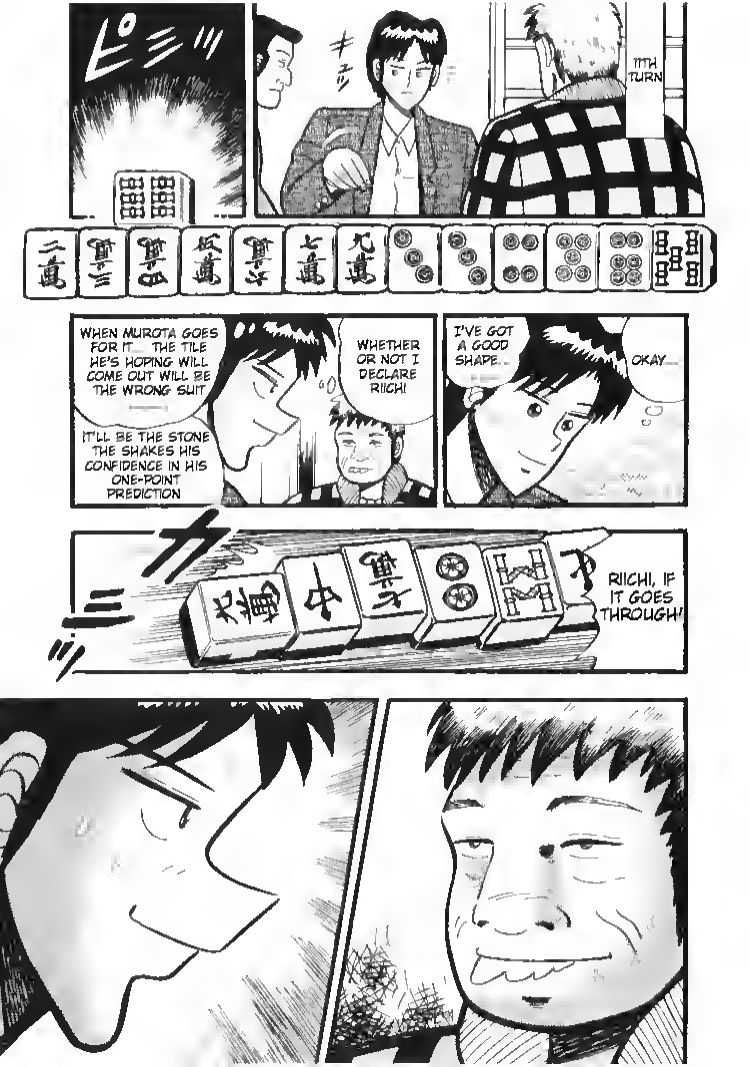
TELLS EVERYTHING...
A TINY DETAIL
ﾅﾅ...
THAT TINY DETAIL
AT OUR LEVEL OF MAHJONG YOUNG FELLA...
THAT'S WHAT WE CALL PLAYING
I HAVE TO THINK A BIT
SHOULD WE TRY GETTING YOU SOME SUNGLASSES SO HE CAN'T SEE YOUR EYE MOVEMENTS?
WHAT DO WE DO ?
NO, IF WE'RE OVER-SENSITIVE, WE'LL JUST PLAY RIGHT INTO HIS HANDS
RATHER?
HE'S A TERRI-FYING PLAYER, ISN'T HE
BUT
REST BREAK

HIROYUKI WENT FOR REVENGE WITH A LITTLE TRICK
8TH GAME
EAST 3RD ROUND
WITH A PLAYER WHO NEATLY ARRANGES THEM RIGHT WAY AROUND, THERE'S A 50% CHANCE THAT A MANZU TILE WILL BE
FOR INSTANCE NONE OF THE MANZU TILES ARE SYMMETRICAL
TURNED AROUND
IN OTHER WORDS
THERE ARE TILES IN MAHJONG THAT ARE VERTICALLY SYMMETRICAL AND THOSE THAT AREN'T.
VERTICALLY SYMMETRICAL
OTHERS
YOU CAN REASON THAT THEY ARE MANZU TILES
WHEN THERE ARE MANY TILES IN THE HAND THAT ARE TURNED AROUND
HE COULD LURE HIS OPPONENT INTO MAKING A MISTAKE.
MANZU OR PINZU
WHEN A TILE CAME OUT OF HIS HAND
HIROYUKI'S HAND
THAT WAS THE TRICK.
HIROYUKI USED THAT HE DIDN'T TURN AROUND THE MANZU TILES AND REPEATEDLY TURNED THE PINZU

HIROYUKI'S HAND
カミ
I DON'T HAVE A CHANCE AT VICTORY
STAYING ON THE DEFENSIVE LIKE THIS
I'LL BREAK HIS CONFIDENCE IN HIS ABILITY TO MAKE A ONE-POINT PREDICTION
HE WON'T NOTICE IT
IT'S OKAY
HE'S NOT RECKLESS, BUT SINCE HE'S YOUNG, HE TRIES TO USE TOO MUCH LOGIC AND WIT IN MAHJONG
BUT IN THE END, HE CAN'T SURPASS ME RIGHT NOW
MAYBE EVEN HAS A BETTER SENSE FOR THE GAME THAN ME
THIS KID REALLY IS A SMART ONE
HEH HEH


PLAYING MAHJONG ISN'T LIKE SHOGI OR GO. IT'S TOO HUGE A REALM, WE HUMANS CAN'T HOPE TO REACH IT
I... ABANDONED THAT KIND OF THING A LONG, LONG TIME AGO.
MUROTA'S HAND
THAT... IS WHAT I'VE GOT AND YOU DON'T...
EXPER-IENCE
YES... MY CHII-TOI-TSU IS
THE THING THAT WILL BURY YOU, NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO IS
PRACTICALLY ALMOST THERE .....
THE REAL WEAPON I'VE SIFTED OUT OF TIME.

THE REALM OF THE GODS
MY CHII-TOI-TSU IS SOMETHING YOU CAN ONLY TRY TO APPROACH
EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM IS A HUMAN SKILL
YOU CAN MAKE WHATEVER YAKU YOU WANT WITH YOUR SENSES BUT
9TH TURN, HIROYUKI DISCARDS THE TILE HE JUST DREW
HIROYUKI'S HAND
HMMMMM.


ピミッ
キュッ
11TH TURN
WHEN MUROTA GOES FOR IT... THE TILE HE'S HOPING WILL COME OUT WILL BE THE WRONG SUIT
IT'LL BE THE STONE THE SHAKES HIS CONFIDENCE IN HIS ONE-POINT PREDICTION
WHETHER OR NOT I DECLARE RIICH!
I'VE GOT A GOOD SHAPE...
OKAY...
RIICHI, IF IT GOES THROUGH!

RON.
HEH HEH HEH
WHY ...?
WAITING ON A MANZU TILE TO COME OUT...?
KIDDO
WHEN I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, I FIGURED THERE WAS A HIGH PROBABILITY THE 9-MAN WOULD COME OUT.
I HAD TWO OF THE 8-MAN AND THERE WERE TWO OUT ON THE TABLE.

THAT WAS STRANGE
YOU DREW AND IMMEDIATELY DISCARDED A MANZU TILE ON THE 9TH TURN
YOU DID A GOOD JOB ALONG THE WAY BUT
DO YOU REMEMBER THAT...?
YOUR TRICK OF TURNING THE TILES AROUND
WELL... IT'S A PRETTY INTERESTING IDEA...
I FOLLOWED YOUR EYES...
IT WAS A SMALL THING...
YOU DREW A 7-MAN AND LOOKED AT YOUR OWN HAND THAT TIME, WITHOUT LOOKING AT THE DUMMY MANZU
FOR A MOMENT TO THE REAL MANZU TILES THAT YOU'D GONE TO THE TROUBLE TO PRETEND WERE A DIFFERENT SUIT...

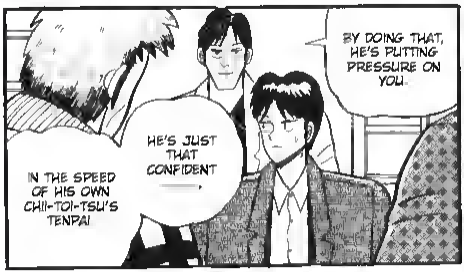
THIS MAN IS A MONSTER
WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT HE COULD GO THAT FAR.
HE COULD FOLLOW HIS EYE MOVEMENTS
SAWADA
HIRO

CHAPTER
14
HOLDING BACK

IT BEGINS AND ENDS - AT MUROTA'S PACE
8TH GAME OF 60 MATCHES, HIROYUKI CONTINUES THE HARSH BATTLE
4...
HE SHOWED HIS TRUE ABILITIES
1,2,3
IN THE 3RD TURN
AND IN THE SOUTH ROUND THAT MET THEM
ハンター
?
?

WHY'S HE TURNING HIS TILES FACE-DOWN...?
I GET THE FEELING HE'S GOING FOR CHII-TOI-TSU AGAIN WITH HIS HAND BUT...
WHAT'S HE DOING...?
THAT'S NUMBER FIVE...
HEH HEH...
IS TURNING HIS TILES FACEDOWN AS HE GETS PAIRS...
THAT MAN...

BUT WHY IS HE LETTING ME KNOW HOW HIS HAND IS PROGRESSING


BY DOING THAT, HE'S PUTTING PRESSURE ON YOU.
HE'S JUST THAT CONFIDENT
IN THE SPEED OF HIS OWN CHII-TOI-TSU'S TENPAI

HIS GOAL IS
PRES-SURE

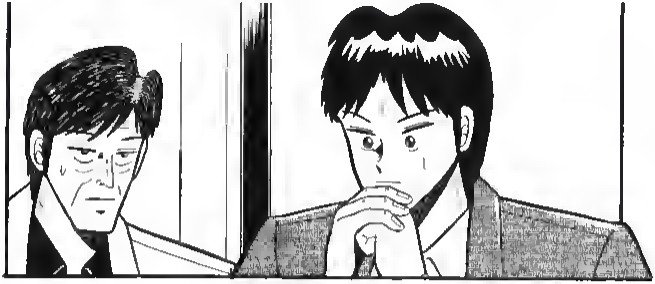
JUST AS YOU SAY, SAWADA
THAT'S EXACTLY RIGHT

HEH HEH HEH

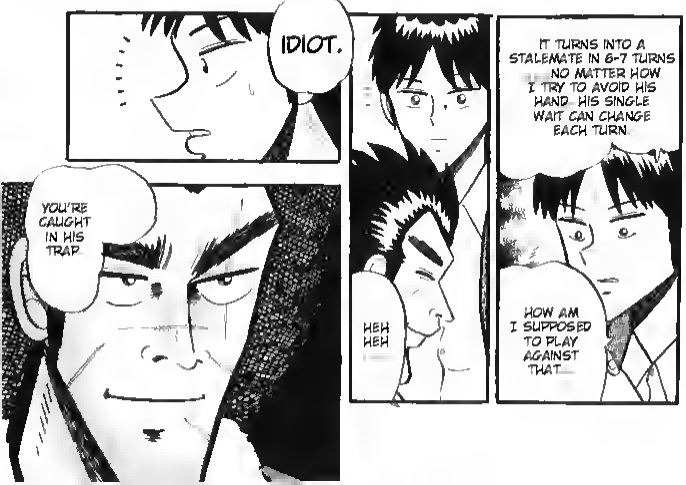
I SEE

THAT IS ACTUALLY WHAT PEOPLE STARTED TO SAY ABOUT THIS SENSE...
MY CHII-TOI-TSU HAS BEEN CALLED GODLIKE
I'M CONFIDENT I START PLAYING, AND AFTER A NUMBER OF HOURS HAVE PASSED I CAN SEE THE WAY THE TILES WILL FLOW
WELL, BUT NOW I CAN'T HELP BUT SPELL IT OUT
I CAN FEEL THE TILES. DRAW THEM IN, PULL THEM TOGETHER
TENPAI
SEE
SEEING IS BELIEV-ING
WELL
HEH HEH HEH
HE REALLY MANAGED TO GET TO CHII-TOI-TSU WITHOUT A SINGLE WASTED TILE

TEN.
TEN.
HEY, HEY...
THIS OLD GUY'S TALKING NONSENSE WONDER HOW LONG HE COULD KEEP GOING?
LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN INTERESTING
JUST KEEP ON GOING
LOOKS LIKE HE'S TRYING TO FIND OUT
DON'T MIND ME
BUT IN THE SOUTH ROUND
MUROTA WAS, IN FACT, GODLIKE.
HE AIMED FOR CHII-TOI-TSU WITH HIS HAND. EVERY TURN
ONE BY ONE, HE TURNED THE TILES FACE-DOWN AND HAD THE SPEED TO REACH TENPAI IN 6 OR 7 TURNS ON AVERAGE.
THE 8TH GAME WAS A LANDSLIDE VICTORY FOR MUROTA TOO



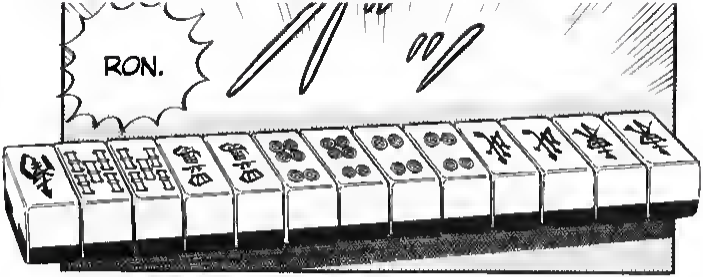
WITH PRACTICALLY NO WASTED TILES, HE GETS TO CHII-TOI-TSU TENPAI IN 6-7 TURNS
MOREOVER, HE'S UNRIVALLED IN PREDICTING THE TILES THAT WILL COME OUT OF OUR HANDS
...AT ANY RATE HE'S BEYOND WHAT WE IMAGINED
SIGH

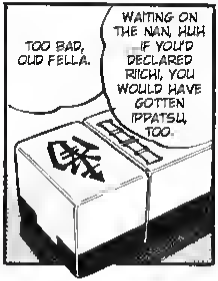

IDIOT.
YOU'RE CAUGHT IN HIS TRAP.
HEH HEH
IT TURNS INTO A STALEMATE IN 6-7 TURNS NO MATTER HOW I TRY TO AVOID HIS HAND. HIS SINGLE WAIT CAN CHANGE EACH TURN.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO PLAY AGAINST THAT...

HIROYUKI
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "WIN AT MAHJONG" ?
?
FIRSTLY, TO COMPLETE YOUR HAND, AND SECONDLY, TO NOT DEAL INTO SOMEONE ELSE'S HAND
IT SEEMS STUPID. BUT THAT'S IT.
IN SHORT
YOU COULD THINK THERE'S SOME BETTER EXPLANATION, BUT
IT'S THE RIGHT ANSWER IN MAHJONG.
YOU JUST HAVE TO MAKE YOUR OPPONENT FOLD .....
THAT WAY, HE WON'T COMPLETE HIS HAND
AND YOU WON'T DEAL INTO THAT HAND
THEN YOU JUST TAKE YOUR TIME AND WIN WITH TSUMO.

THAT'S MAHJONG
MAKE HIM FOLD, AND W'IN.
YOU'VE BEEN FOLDING AGAINST HIM, HIROYUKI
HE'S GLOATING
IT WAS ALL FOR DOING THAT
TALKING LIKE HE HAS EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION, TOO
SWITCH WITH ME FOR THE NEXT HAN-CHAN!!
HIROYUKI
THAT OLD GUY'S MASK...
AS FAR AS GUYS THAT SAY THAT GO...
GODLIKE, HUH
THEY'RE ASTOUNDING IN THEIR MEAN LITTLE WAY OF PLAYING...
I'LL STRIP IT CLEAN OFF HIM!!

9TH GAME
EAST 1ST ROUND
FOUR PAIRS IN THE FIFTH TURN
HMMMM. TENPAI ALREADY, HUH?
7TH TURN
OH WELL.
UMMM.


RON.


TOO BAD, OLD FELLA.
WAITING ON THE NAN, HUH IF YOU'D DECLARED RICHI, YOU WOULD HAVE GOTTEN IPPATSU, TOO.

HMMM.

I DEALT IN, RIGHT AWAY...
WHAT THE HECK
OH NO

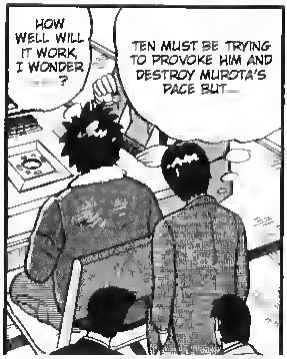
HEH HEH

EVEN IF YOU'RE JOKING
I DON'T KNOW MY OPPONENT VERY WELL IN THE EAST FIRST ROUND... WOULD YOU DECLARE RICHI ON A TILE LIKE THIS THAT HASN'T BEEN PLAYED YET...?
YOU'RE A PRETTY CARELESS GUY.....

THIS HAND'S ENOUGH FOR ME.....

ALL IN GOOD TIME
THAT'S NOT THE CASE AT ALL, AND I'LL TEACH YOU TO STAND UP AND START TAKING NOTICE OF UNEXPECTEDLY FINE DETAILS, TOO.
カチャ
カチャ
THREE SETS OF TILES THIS TIME—!
HMMM.
TEN'S HAND
LIKE THIS, RIGHT?
カチャ
WELL, I'LL GO TOO—!

THIS ONE'S A GROUP OF THREE
A PAIR AND...
THERE'S NO REASON YOU HAVE TO BE THE ONLY ONE SAYING HOW YOUR HAND'S PROGRESSING
フフ...
I'LL LAY MINE FACE-DOWN AS I COMPLETE MY SETS TOO
THE SAME CONDITIONS
HEY, FELLA
DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE ME TOO MUCH


HOW WELL WILL IT WORK, I WONDER...?
TEN MUST BE TRYING TO PROVOKE HIM AND DESTROY MUROTA'S PACE BUT...

YEAH...
THIS IS GETTING WEIRD
ヒソ

THIS WAY OF FIGHTING
MUROTA'S SO-CALLED SPECIALTY
ENTERING HIS OPPONENT'S RING AND TAKING THE TROUBLE TO GET HIM INTO THE GAME
...FIRST
HE HAS TO GET INTO TENPAI FAST.
2ND TURN
4TH TURN
6TH TURN
IN TENPAI ON THE 6TH TURN WITHOUT WASTING A TILE
HE REALLY IS A MONSTER, THIS MAN

HMMMM
HOW ABOUT THIS ONE?
WELL
TENPAI, HUH YOU'RE FAST
I SEE
THAT'S CRAZY
HEH HEH
PLAYING THAT DORA WORD TILE AGAINST CHII-TOI-TSU
HE GOT RID OF THE DORA

THE KIND OF TILE THAT COMES OUT IN THE WAY THIS OLD FELLA LIKES
THEN, THIS ONE IS
HM
HMMM
カニ
GH
UWAH
HUH
IT WENT THROUGH

AH

?
COULD THAT BE IT, THEN
BY ANY CHANCE

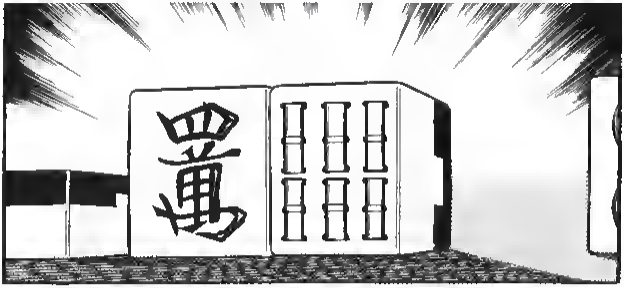
I FIGURED HIM OUT, HIROYUKI

MAKING HIMSELF OUT TO BE A MONSTER OR A GOD, BUT
THE WEAPON USED IN FOLDING IS HIS "IMAGE"...
THIS OLD FELLA... INCORPORATED THE FACE-DOWN CHII-TOI-TSU AS A MORE PHYSICAL TACTIC...

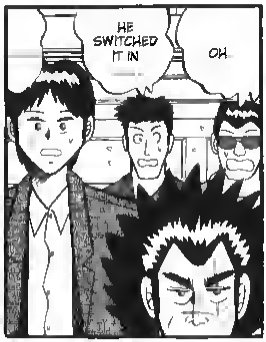
THIS OLD FELLA'S MAHJONG IS ALL ABOUT FOLDING.
I SAID IT A WHILE AGO...

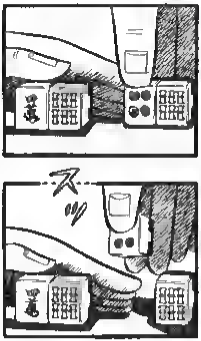
THOSE LAST TWO FACE-DOWN TILES HAVEN'T BECOME A PAIR.
A YAKU WHERE IT'S COMPARATIVELY FAST TO GET AS FAR AS II-SHAN-TEN OR EVEN TENPAI
CHII-TOI-TSU IS... AS YOU KNOW
THE OLD FELLA'S USING THE NATURE OF CHII-TOI-TSU. IN SHORT
AND AFTER-WARDS, WHILE WE AVOID DEALING INTO HIS HAND...
BUT BY TURNING THEM FACEDOWN HE CAN LURE US INTO AN ILLUSION THAT HE'S ALREADY IN TENPAI
RIGHT, OLD FELLA?
PRETTY CLEVER.
WELL, IT'D BE AGAINST THE RULES
THERE'S NO REASON HE'D DECLARE RIICHI...
WHEN HE DRAWS THE TILE HE NEEDS FOR TENPAI, ACTING AS THOUGH HE'S CHANGING HIS WAIT, HE CASUALLY SLIPS IT IN...
HE SLOWLY PROGRESSES TOWARDS HIS OWN TENPAI
HE WAS ACTUALLY IN TENPAI ON THE 12TH TURN BUT COULD MAKE US THINK IT WAS ON THE 6TH TURN.

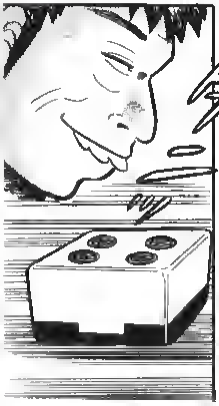
カミ"
HE WOULDN'T WIN.
IF HE COULDN'T SWITCH ONE IN, EVEN IF HE TOOK A HUNDRED YEARS
IN SHORT, THOSE TWO TILES ARE DISORGANIZED
HEH HEH


四萬

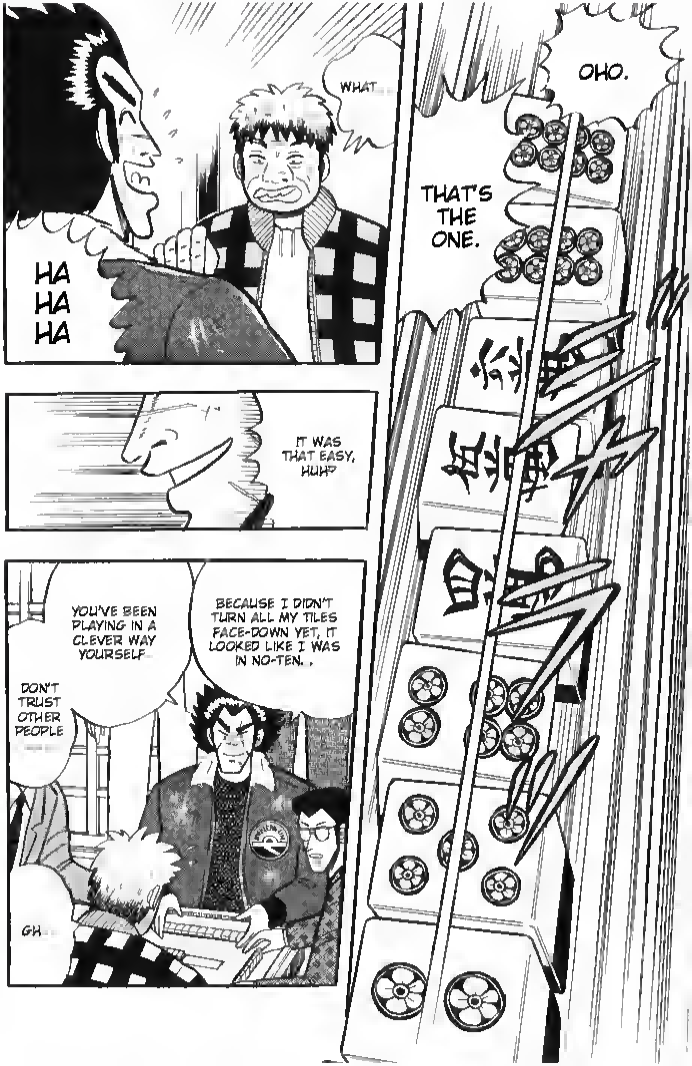
HEH HEH


HE SWITCHED IT IN
OH





WELL, LET'S GO WITH WHAT I'D BEEN EXPECTING FROM YOU
IT'S SIMPLE BUT IT'S A PRETTY EASY TRAP TO FALL INTO


OHO.
THAT'S THE ONE.
WHAT...
HA HA HA
IT WAS THAT EASY, HUH?
BECAUSE I DIDN'T TURN ALL MY TILES FACE-DOWN YET, IT LOOKED LIKE I WAS IN NO-TEN. .
YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING IN A CLEVER WAY YOURSELF
DON'T TRUST OTHER PEOPLE
GH...

TEN.
TEN.
RIGHT, THAT'S DEALER TAN-YAO, SAN-SHOKU. TTOO

WHEN HE'S BEEN SPLIT OFF FROM HIS FIELD AHEAD OF TIME, HE CAN'T MAKE PREDICTIONS BASED ON THE MOOD AND STRUGGLES TO BREATHE!
FOR NOW WE'LL LET HIM BRING WHATEVER HE WANTS TO THE BATTLE ROYALE
THE GAME'S OVER NOW!!
NOW NOW
JUST LIKE WE FIGURED!!

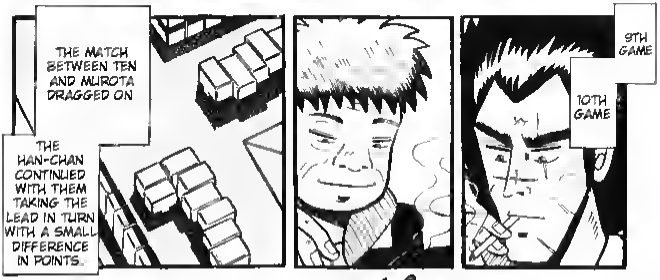
DEALER'S FIRST ROUND
カラ…
WELL
IT'S ABOUT TIME WE NEEDED A CHANGE.

THE COUNTER-ATTACK BEGINS.

天

CHAPTER 15

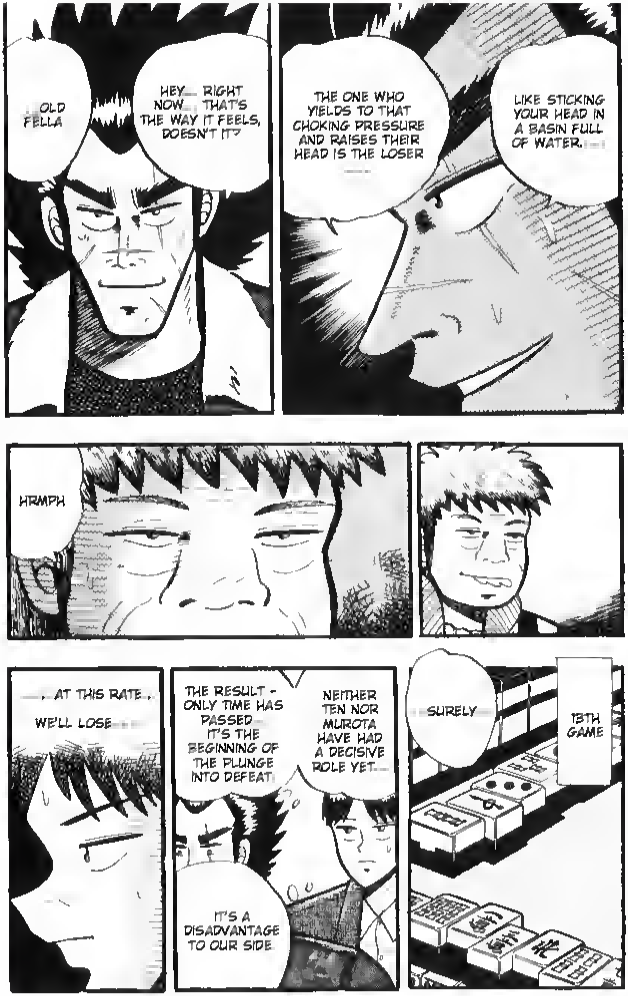
TESTING OF STRENGTH

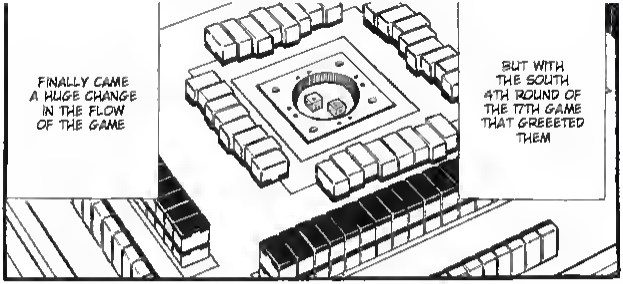

THE MATCH BETWEEN TEN AND MUROTA DRAGGED ON
THE HAN-CHAN CONTINUED WITH THEM TAKING THE LEAD IN TURN WITH A SMALL DIFFERENCE IN POINTS.
9TH GAME
10TH GAME

MUROTA ISN'T GIVING IN
THE MARVEL OF HIS SINGLE-POINT PREDICTION IS ALIVE AND WELL
SURE THAT TRICK WITH TURNING THE TILES FACE-DOWN IN CHII-TOI-TSU THAT UNNATURAL SPEED OF HIS TENPAI IS ERASED BUT

THAT MUROTA WAS PREDICTING...
IN BRIEF, KEEPING HOLD OF THE TILE
BY DOING SO, MUROTA'S HAND COULDN'T MOVE EITHER
BECAUSE THEY'RE BOTH WAITING ON THE SAME SINGLE TILE...
TEN PUT TOGETHER A TACTIC AGAINST THAT ONE-POINT PREDICTION OF MUROTA'S
IT'S TOO BAD THERE'S NOTHING MORE THAN THIS...
BUT
IT'S GOOD, BUT...
HE TURNED THE ACCURACY OF MUROTA'S PREDICTION TO HIS ADVANTAGE.
THE END RESULT CONTINUED WHERE NEITHER OF THEM WOULD DEAL IN AND NEITHER COULD BE DEALT INTO
THE TWO OF THEM SEEMED TO BE IN A STALEMATE.

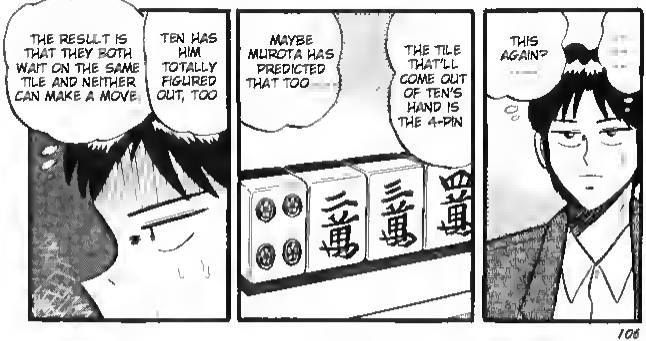
HOW FAR DO THEY PLAN TO KEEP GOING
CH'
AT THIS KIND OF MAHJONG ...?
12TH TURN
11TH TURN
ISN'T THERE ANYBODY ON YOUR SIDE WITH THAT OPINION TOO?..
I'M THE SAME WONDERING HOW LONG THIS IS GOING TO KEEP ON FOR...
YOU'RE PRETTY PERSISTENT...
WHEW
MAHJONG IS...
I REMEMBER AN INTERESTING WAY TO DESCRIBE THE GAME OF MAHJONG
WHO WAS IT THAT SAID IT? ... I'VE FORGOTTEN, BUT...
HEH HEH...

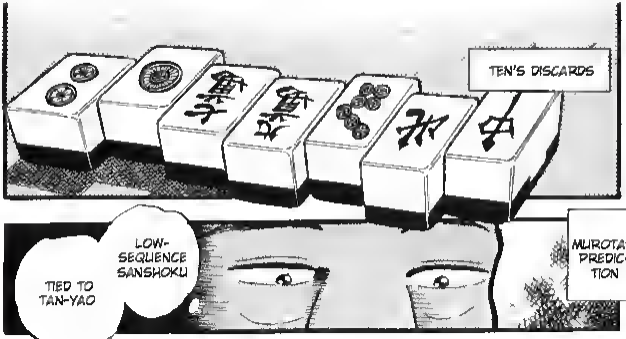

OLD FELLA
HEY... RIGHT NOW... THAT'S THE WAY IT FEELS, DOESN'T IT?
THE ONE WHO YIELDS TO THAT CHOKING PRESSURE AND RAISES THEIR HEAD IS THE LOSER
LIKE STICKING YOUR HEAD IN A BASIN FULL OF WATER...
HRMPH
...AT THIS RATE, WE'LL LOSE...
THE RESULT - ONLY TIME HAS PASSED... IT'S THE BEGINNING OF THE PLUNGE INTO DEFEAT
NEITHER TEN NOR MUROTA HAVE HAD A DECISIVE ROLE YET...
IT'S A DISADVANTAGE TO OUR SIDE
SURELY
13TH GAME

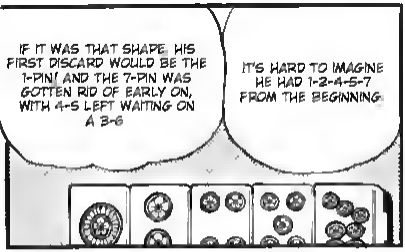

FINALLY CAME A HUGE CHANGE IN THE FLOW OF THE GAME
BUT WITH THE SOUTH 4TH ROUND OF THE 17TH GAME THAT GREEETED THEM

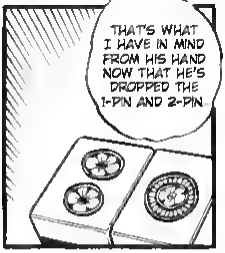
MUROTA'S TENPAI
7TH TURN

TEN'S II-SHAN-TEN

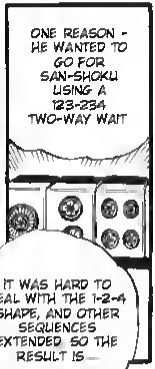

THE RESULT IS THAT THEY BOTH WAIT ON THE SAME TILE AND NEITHER CAN MAKE A MOVE
TEN HAS HIM TOTALLY FIGURED OUT, TOO
MAYBE MUROTA HAS PREDICTED THAT TOO
THE TILE THAT'LL COME OUT OF TEN'S HAND IS THE 4-PIN
THIS AGAIN?

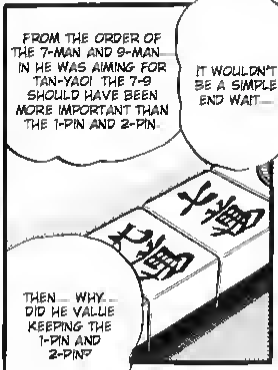

TEN'S DISCARDS
LOW-SEQUENCE SANSHOKU TIED TO TAN-YAO
MUROTA'S PREDIC-TION


IF IT WAS THAT SHAPE, HIS FIRST DISCARD WOULD BE THE 1-PIN! AND THE 7-PIN WAS GOTTEN RID OF EARLY ON, WITH 4-5 LEFT WAITING ON A 3-6
IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE HE HAD 1-2-4-5-7 FROM THE BEGINNING

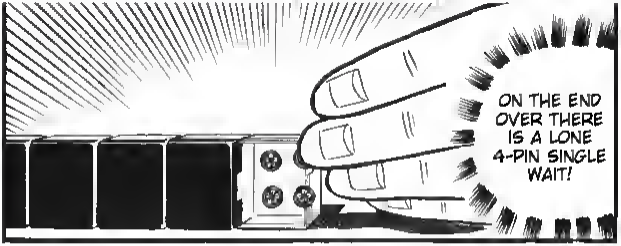

THAT'S WHAT I HAVE IN MIND FROM HIS HAND NOW THAT HE'S DROPPED THE 1-PIN AND 2-PIN

NOW... HE HAS A LONE 4-PIN——!!


ONE REASON - HE WANTED TO GO FOR SAN-SHOKU USING A 123-234 TWO-WAY WAIT
IT WAS HARD TO DEAL WITH THE 1-2-4 SHAPE, AND OTHER SEQUENCES EXTENDED SO THE RESULT IS——


FROM THE ORDER OF THE 7-MAN AND 9-MAN—— IN HE WAS AIMING FOR TAN-YAO! THE 7-9 SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE 1-PIN AND 2-PIN.
IT WOULDN'T BE A SIMPLE END WAIT——
THEN... WHY—— DID HE VALUE KEEPING THE 1-PIN AND 2-PIN?

ダニッ
TEN'S TENPAI WAITING ON 4-PIN
THE ONLY DIFFERENT PATTERN COULD HAVE BEEN 2-4 AND HE GOT A 5 BUT
二萬
三萬
四萬
伍萬
六萬
七萬
KAN!
IT WENT INTO HIS HAND. GUESS HE'S IN TENPAI
TEN'S DEFINITELY WAITING ON A 4-PIN.
OHO WITH THAT, TEN'S CHANCES TO HAVE DRAWN A 5-PIN HAVE BEEN TOTALLY ELIMINATED
カミ

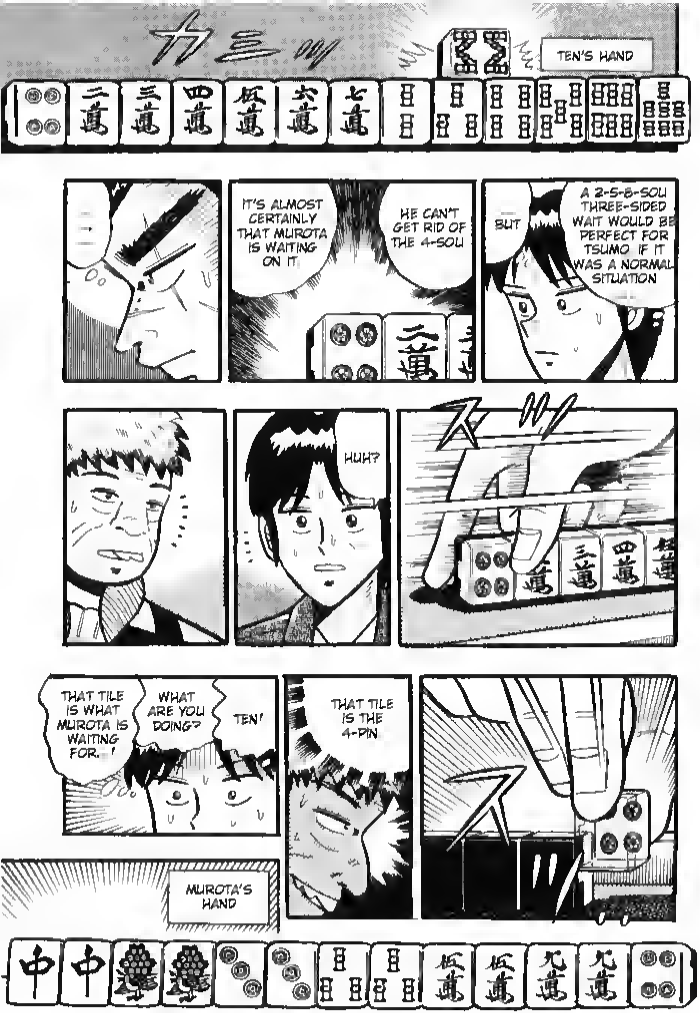

ON THE END OVER THERE IS A LONE 4-PIN SINGLE WAIT!

HUH...?

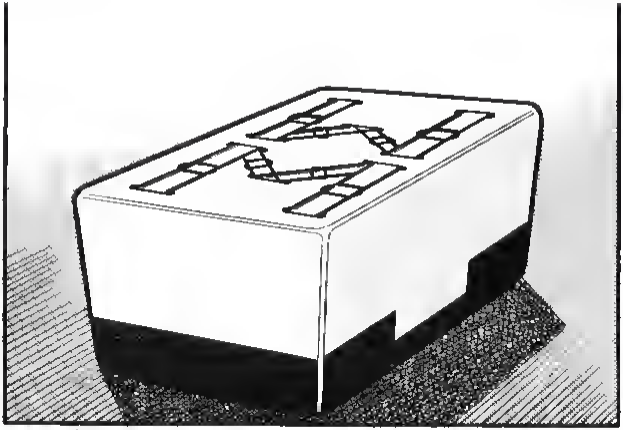
ATAMA-HANE, HUH
CH'

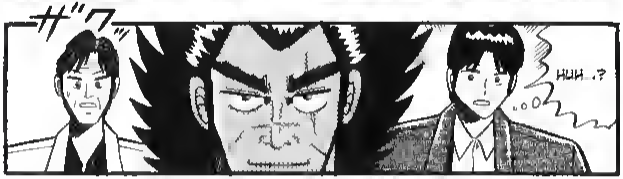
TEN OVER-LOOKED IT...!!

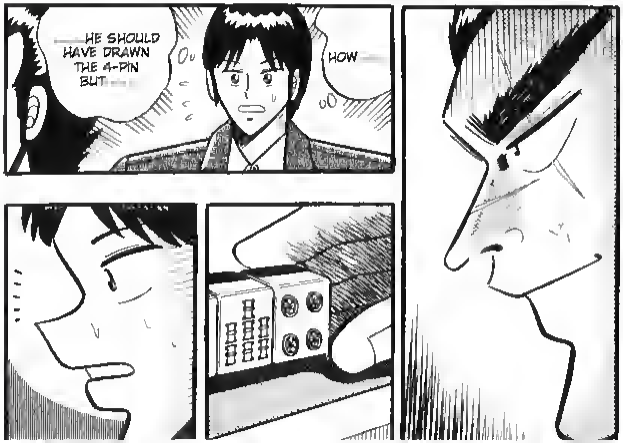
THE OLD FELLA THAT SHOWED HIS TRUE FACE
WHAT I WANT IS A WIN FROM THIS OLD FELLA.
RUNNING OFF WITH THE LEAD DOESN'T REALLY MEAN ANYTHING IN THIS HAN-CHAN...
THAT'S RIGHT. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I PICKED UP THAT CHEAP NUMBER OF POINTS?
YO'RE WAITING ON THE 4-PIN. MY CONFIDENCE IN MY PREDICTION ISN'T WAVERING...
DOES HE THINK THAT WILL MAKE ME FEEL SAFE AND I'LL DISCARD THE 4-PIN OR SOMETHING?
...WHAT A STUPID WAY OF LEADING ME ON...
JUST NOW, HE OVERLOOKED THE 4-PIN
HMPH.

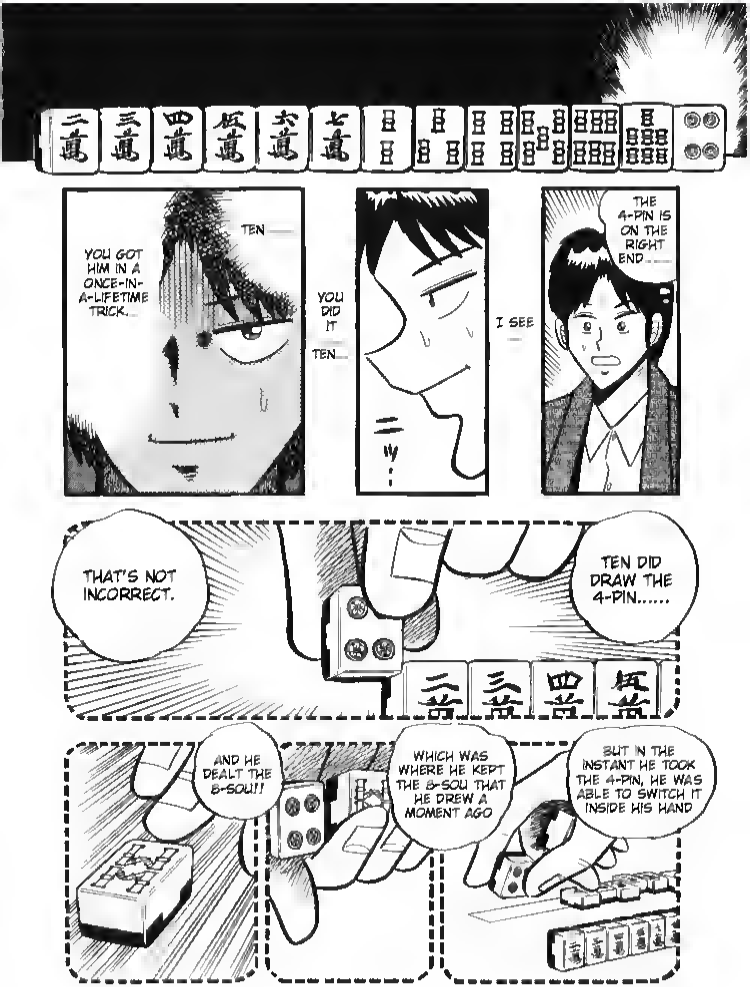

TEN'S HAND
IT'S ALMOST CERTAINLY THAT MUROTA IS WAITING ON IT.
HE CAN'T GET RID OF THE 4-SOU
BUT...
A 2-5-8-SOU THREE-SIDED WAIT WOULD BE PERFECT FOR TSUMO IF IT WAS A NORMAL SITUATION
HUH?
THAT TILE IS WHAT MUROTA IS WAITING FOR...!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
TEN!
THAT TILE IS THE 4-PIN
MUROTA'S HAND

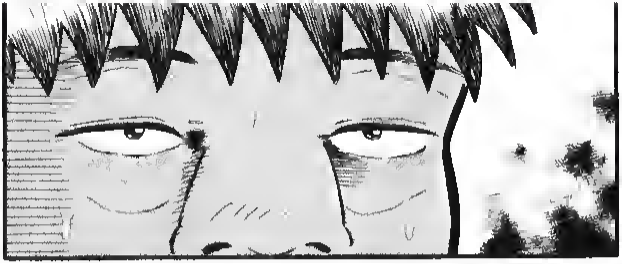
HE DEALT INTO HIS HAND!




ザワ…
HUH..?


HE SHOULD HAVE DRAWN THE 4-PIN BUT…
HOW…


YOU GOT HIM IN A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME TRICK.
TEN
YOU DID IT
TEN
I SEE
THE 4-PIN IS ON THE RIGHT END
THAT'S NOT INCORRECT.
TEN DID DRAW THE 4-PIN.....
AND HE DEALT THE 8-SOU!!
WHICH WAS WHERE HE KEPT THE 8-SOU THAT HE DREW A MOMENT AGO
BUT IN THE INSTANT HE TOOK THE 4-PIN, HE WAS ABLE TO SWITCH IT INSIDE HIS HAND



WRONG, THEREFORE

TO MUROTA, HIS PREDICTION FOR THE TILE THAT WOULD COME OUT OF TEN'S HAND WAS...

HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON ANYMORE

MUROTA'S CLEARLY CONFUSED.

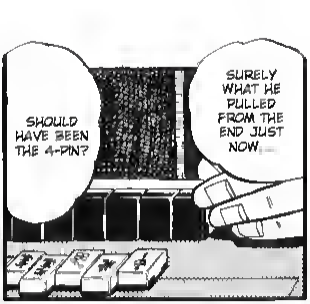
HEH HEH...

HE'LL SELF-DESTRUCT!!

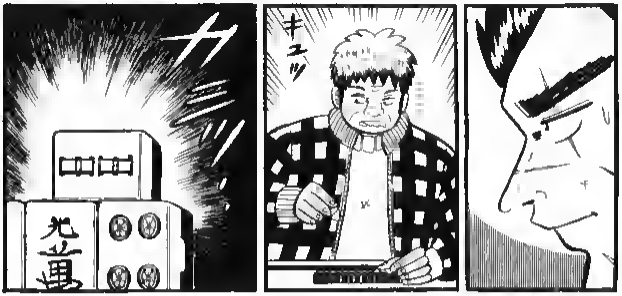
AS LONG AS HE DOESN'T REALIZE THAT TEN'S HAND HAD 12 TILES FOR AN INSTANT WHILE HE DID THE TRICK...

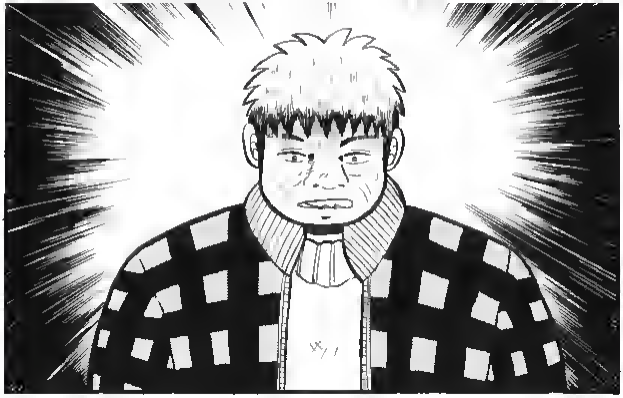
WHY...?

FOR AN INSTANT, IT TURNED INTO 12 TILES!!
二萬
三萬
四萬
伍萬
六萬
七萬
YOU HAD THEM ALL IN YOUR HAND
IT'S NOT CHEATING, TEN
I SEE
AFTER THE DISCARD, THE 4-PIN IN HIS HAND WENT TO THE RIGHT END
JUST BARELY A TRICK.
IT'S WITHIN THE ALLOW-ABLE RANGE.

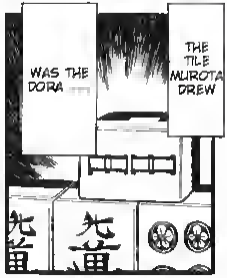


MUROTA'S HAND

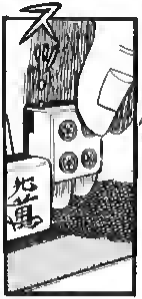




NORMALLY IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT DANGER TILE IN A SINGLE WAIT
THIS TILE WILL BE HARD TO DISCARD


THE TILE MUROTA DREW
WAS THE DORA

HERE
SINCE MY PREDICTION WENT ASTRAY

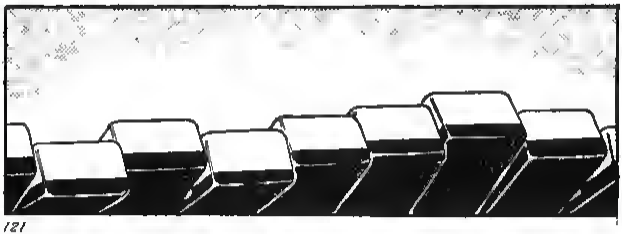

WHAT ABOUT THIS ONE?

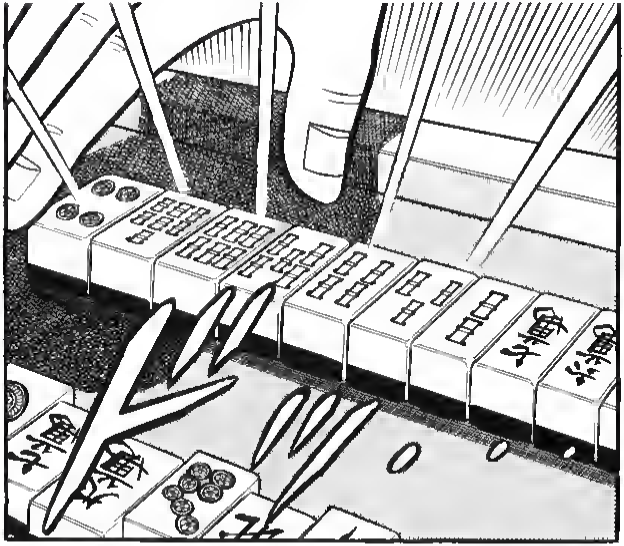
DO I BREAK UP ONE OF MY PAIRS?
BUT THAT'S LIKE CONFESSING I DIDN'T NARROW IN ON A SINGLE POINT WAIT
WHAT SHOULD I DO

BUT
ピタ……
IF THIS IS THE ONE...
BUT... WAIT...!!
URGH

AMERICAN LIFE
FINALLY... OLD FELLA.

YOU RAISED YOUR HEAD .....
AMERICAN LIFE

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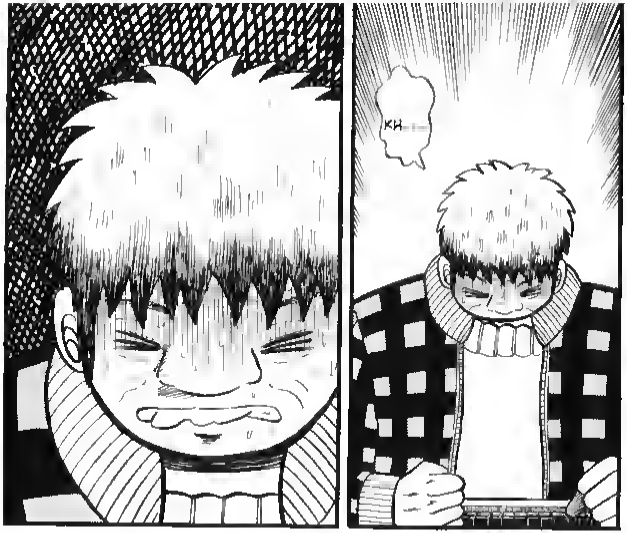
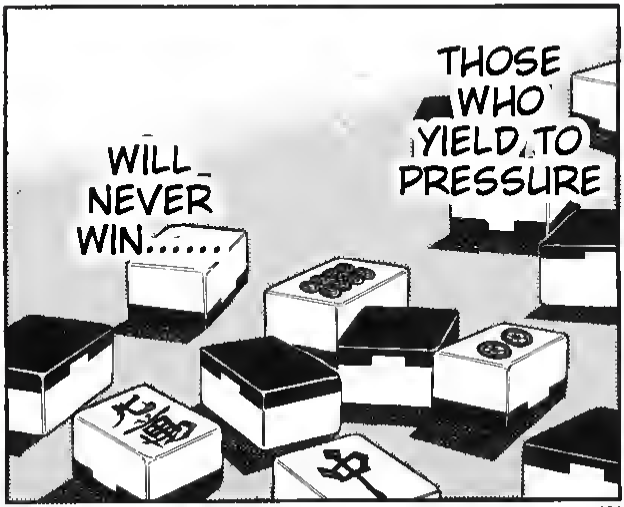

KH...

THAT'S THE END OF IT...
...OLD FELLA

TEN...
TEN...

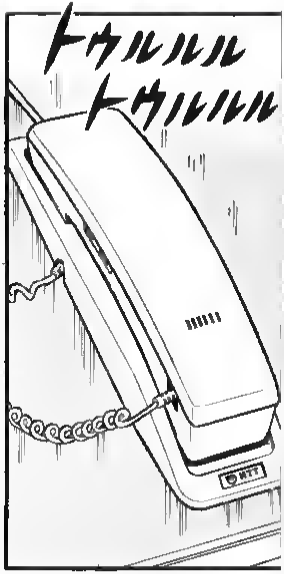
YOU'VE GIVEN IN...
YOU... PROBABLY WON'T BE ABLE TO WIN AGAINST ME ANYMORE...

WHAT YOU COULDN'T PREDICT WAS YOUR OWN MIND...
YOU RAN FROM REAL SUFFERING
...NO MATTER WHAT YOU'RE INVOLVED IN .....

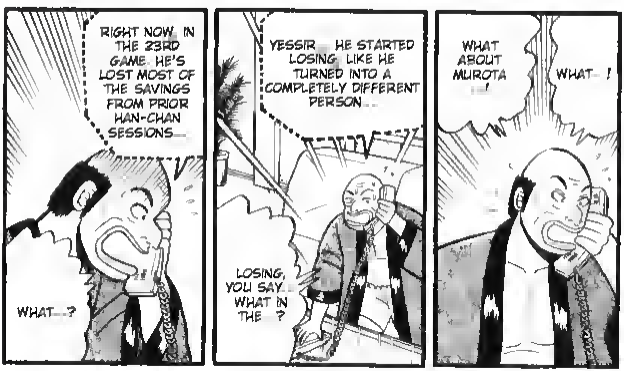

THOSE WHO YIELD TO PRESSURE
WILL NEVER WIN.....

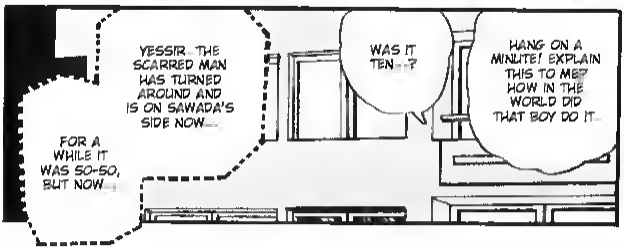
CHAPTER
16
SUPERIOR
TALENT

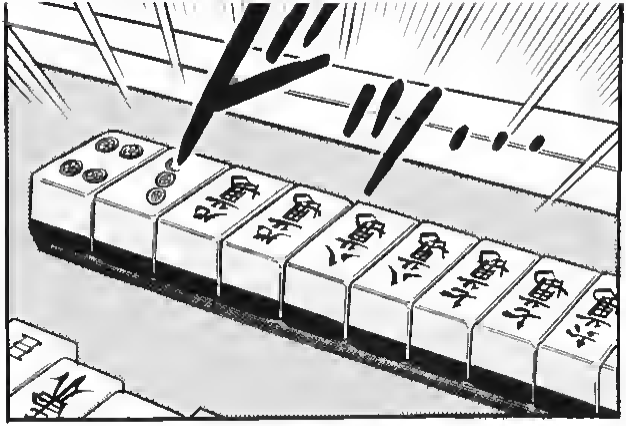
OH, SORRY, I STEPPED OUT FOR A BIT...
YEAH, IT'S ME...


トゥルルル
トゥルルル

WHAAAT...


RIGHT NOW IN THE 23RD GAME HE'S LOST MOST OF THE SAVINGS FROM PRIOR HAN-CHAN SESSIONS...
WHAT...?
YESSIR... HE STARTED LOSING LIKE HE TURNED INTO A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON...
LOSING, YOU SAY... WHAT IN THE ?
WHAT ABOUT MUROTA ...!
WHAT...!

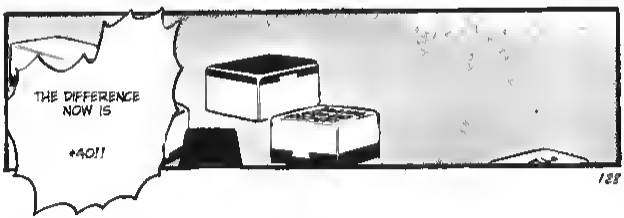

FOR A WHILE IT WAS 50-50, BUT NOW...
YESSIR... THE SCARRED MAN HAS TURNED AROUND AND IS ON SAWADA'S SIDE NOW...
WAS IT TEN...?
HANG ON A MINUTE! EXPLAIN THIS TO ME! HOW IN THE WORLD DID THAT BOY DO IT...



THIS'LL BE THE FIFTH GAME IN A ROW WITH YOU IN THE LEAD!
わーっ
YEAH!!
HE'S ON THE RUN NOW...

PINFU, II-PEI-KOU, 3 DORA - MANGAN.
RON

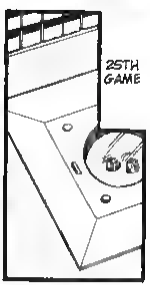
COUNTING THE LAST EIGHT SASHI-UMA GAMES


THE DIFFERENCE NOW IS
+40!!

YES
PLEASE!
ALL RIGHT, SHOULD I GO FOR THE REST IN ONE SHOT?!!

BARELY INCLINED TO PLAY...
THAT WAS THE HIGHLIGHT MUROTA'S BROKEN-DOWN NOW...

WHAT'S GOING ON NOW...
BUT...

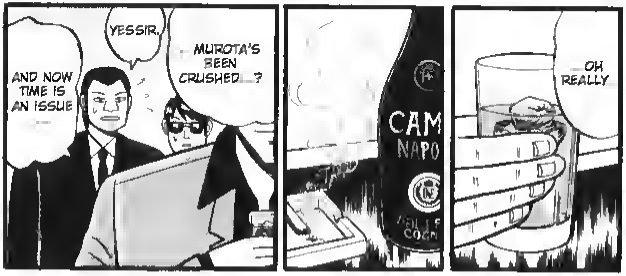

25TH GAME

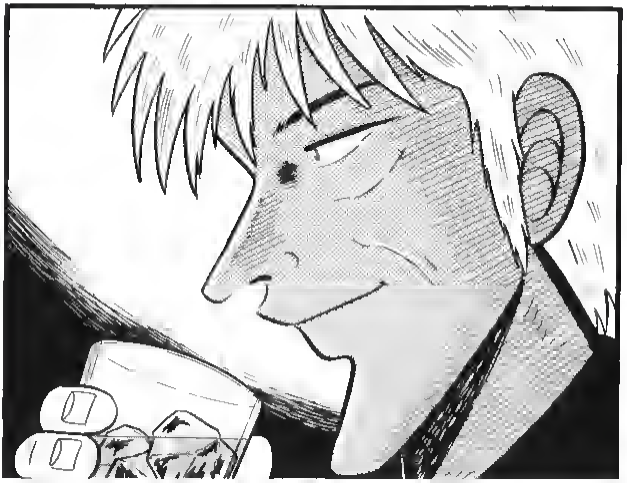
WITHOUT IT, MUROTA IS AN EMPTY SHELL NOW.....

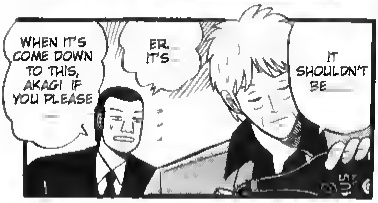
NO MATTER WHAT SKILL OR INSIGHTS YOU HAVE, THEY'RE ALL SUPPORTED BY THAT.
IN THE END IT'S A GAME OF SELF-CONFIDENCE.

GET THAT MAN WE CALLED AT THE START TO COME. NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES
IF IT'S COME DOWN TO THIS
OKAY, MASAKI?
YESSIR
YESSIR.
I'LL BRING HIM OVER. THE PLACE IS
YESSIR.
— EXCEPT FOR THAT MAN.
THERE'S NOBODY THAT CAN STOP TEN NOW

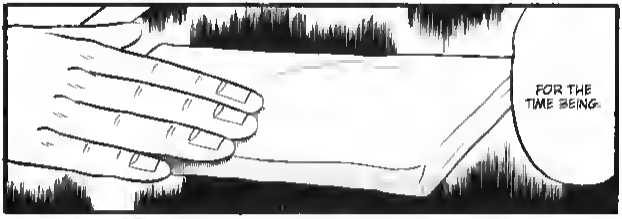
SNACK
SNACK
PM1 00 — AM4 00
SNACK


AND NOW TIME IS AN ISSUE
YESSIR.
MUROTA'S BEEN CRUSHED...?
CAM
NAPO
OH REALLY



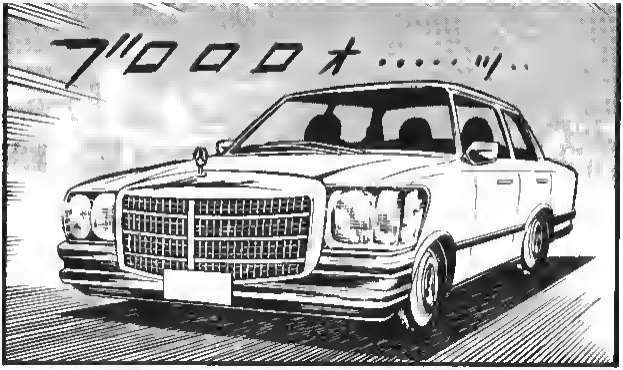

WHEN IT'S COME DOWN TO THIS, AKAGI IF YOU PLEASE
ER, IT'S
IT SHOULDN'T BE

AND THERE'S THIS
ON THE CHAIRMAN'S WISHES

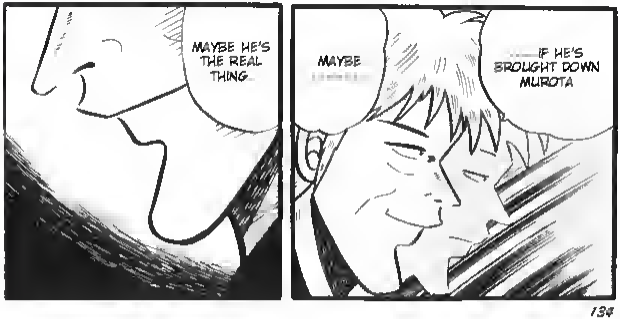

FOR THE TIME BEING

I KNOW IT'S GRAVELY RUDE OF US BUT...
PAYMENT BEFORE-HAND...
IT'S .
AH, NO!

THE CAR SHOULD PROBABLY BE ON IT'S WAY ALREADY
THEN... THAT MEANS...
Y-YESSIR!!
HUH?
HEH HEH HEH...
FOR THE TIME BEING, PAY THIS FOR ME...

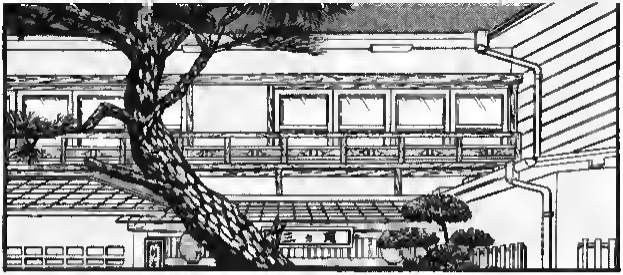

ブロロロ……

I'VE HEARD RUMORS ABOUT HIM.
THE MAN CALLED ...TEN.
AH...


MAYBE HE'S THE REAL THING...
MAYBE
...IF HE'S BROUGHT DOWN MUROTA

I DON'T HAVE THE STAMINA FOR LONG MATCHES THESE DAYS...
WHEN THERE'S BEEN A DELAY, IT'S A BIT OF A PAIN——
230 E
2.3 16

WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAY ONE GO.....?
I'LL JUST HAVE TO DO IT ALL IN ONE GO.
TEN OR TWENTY GAMES .....



I FIGURED AS MUCH

IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE GOING TO SWITCH PLAYERS FOR THE NEXT HAN-CHAN

REST BREAK

IN FACT, THEIR LEVEL CAN ONLY GO DOWN.

THERE'S NO WAY THEY'LL FIND SOMEONE IN MUROTA'S CLASS VERY EASILY——

THEY'RE ALREADY LOOKING AHEAD——

IN OTHER WORDS THEY CAN'T LET DOWN THEIR GUARD THIS MATCH——

?

BUT ANYTHING WOULD BE BETTER THAN MUROTA RIGHT NOW...

?
ス・・・
THEY
TEN...
SIGH.
ドカッ
BROUGHT SOMEONE TERRIBLE BACK WITH THEM...

...
...
...
WHY'S HE HERE.....
...ISN'T THAT... AKAGI SHIGERU?
...IS HE GOOD?

HE'S... ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL THAN PEOPLE LIKE ME, I NEVER EVEN HAD A GAME AGAINST HIM...
UNTIL THEN, HE'D BEEN UNBEATABLE...
HE WITHDREW FROM THIS WORLD MORE THAN THREE YEARS AGO, BUT...
IF AKAGI SHIGERU WAS DIFFICULT TO BEAT BACK THEN...
ONLY...
HE'S THE KIND OF GUY THAT'S TALKED ABOUT ALL THOUGH OUR WORLD...
IF HE'S DROPPED EVEN 1% IN ABILITY...

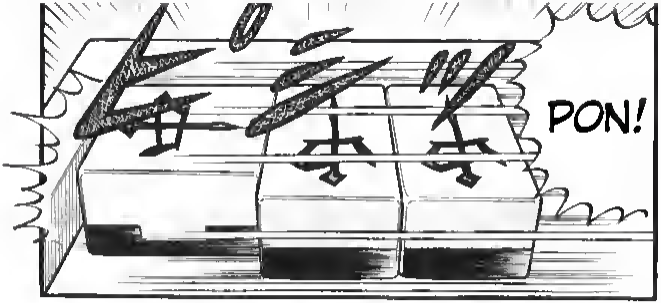
I GUESS I'LL BE PLAYING A SASHI-UMA GAME WITH THIS MAN, THEN
SO..?

HEH HEH

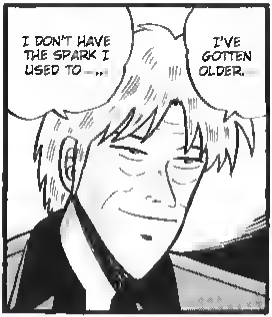
THERE WILL BE A CHANCE AT VICTORY
AMERICAN TYPE

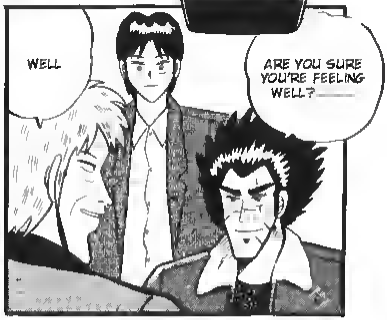
WHAT KIND OF A PLAYER IS AKAGI ?
SAWADA

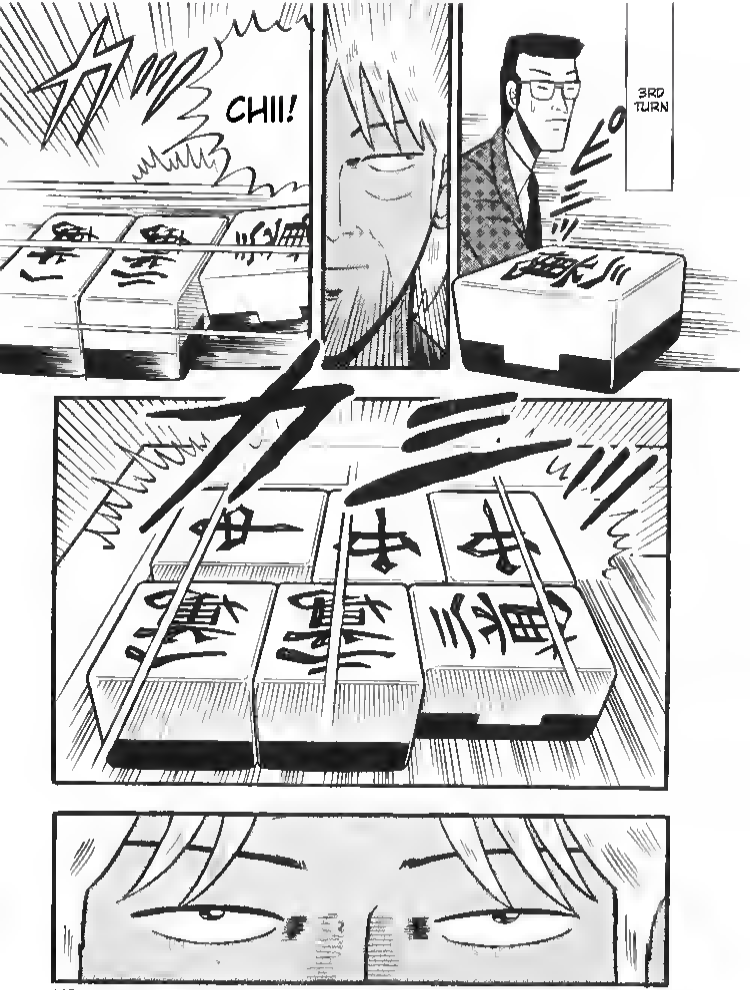
A LONG TIME AGO... I WATCHED HIS GAME FROM BEHIND HIM.
I...
TO EVERYONE
HE HAS SOME KIND OF VITALITY
HE'S NOT JUST GOOD AT MAHJONG, THAT MAN
NOBODY COULD IMITATE THE PECULIARIES OF THAT PRO PLAYER.
TO PUT IT SIMPLY, HE WAS BRILLIANT.
AN UNMISTAKABLY NATURAL GAMBLER.



AKAGI CALLED ON THE SECOND TURN



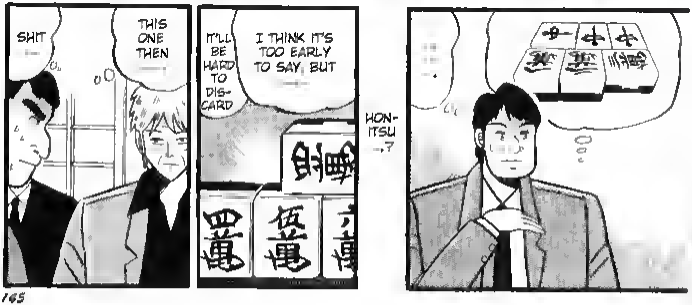


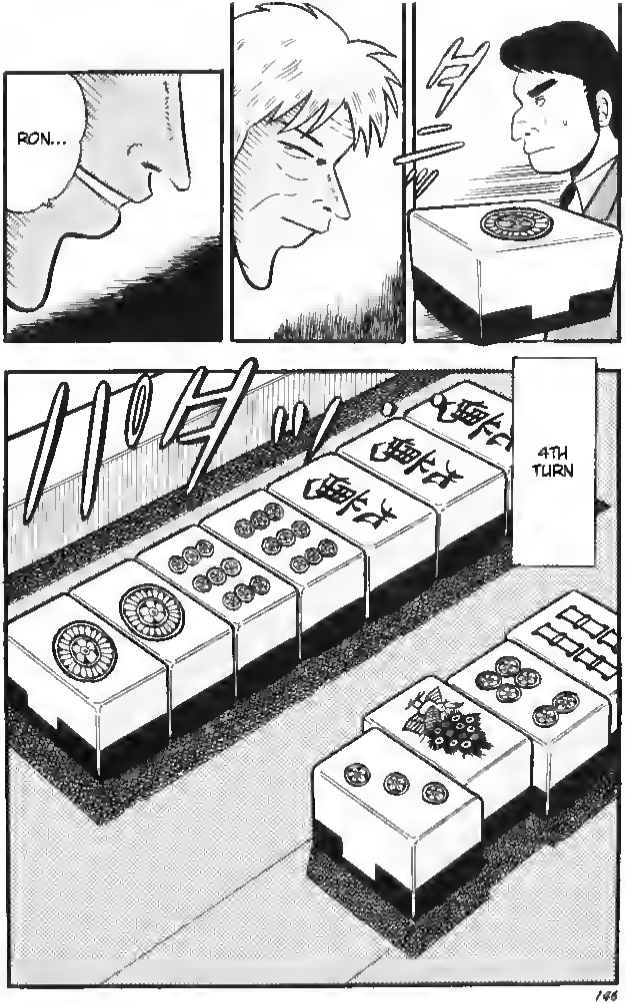

CHII!
3RD TURN

SIMPLY PUT, IT'S NOT JUST THAT HIS PLAN OF ATTACK IS FAST...
ALREADY THE GAME'S COMING TO A BOIL...
IT'S ONLY BEEN THE BLINK OF AN EYE SINCE IT STARTED
AMA-ZING

THIS MAN HAS GATHERED ALL THAT VITALITY WITHIN HIMSELF
I KNOW
LIKE SOMETHING IN THE AIR
IT'S INDESCRIBABLE
THE MAN IS EMITTING AN ATMOSPHERE FROM INSIDE HIMSELF

THIS IS WHAT HOLDS A STRONG FASCINATION TO THE AVERAGE, UNTALENTED PERSON.....
BRILLIANCE...! A HUGE CAPACITY FOR THE BRILLIANCE THAT'S EXPECTED OF HIM, TOO...!


SHIT
THIS ONE THEN
IT'LL BE HARD TO DISCARD
I THINK IT'S TOO EARLY TO SAY, BUT
HONITSU ~?

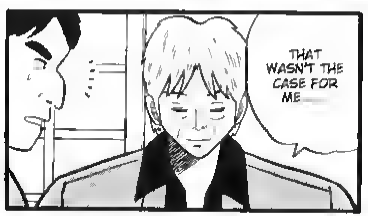

RON...
4TH TURN

OH REALLY

I COULDN'T HELP IT... I CAN'T BELIEVE HE GOT TO THAT POINT IN ONLY FOUR TURNS.
ARGH
I COULDN'T GET ANY-WHERE WITH MY HAND IN 4 TURNS

CHANTA

IT FELT LIKE I DREW ELEVEN TIMES.

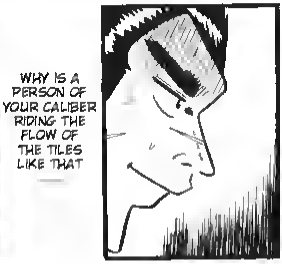

THAT WASN'T THE CASE FOR ME...

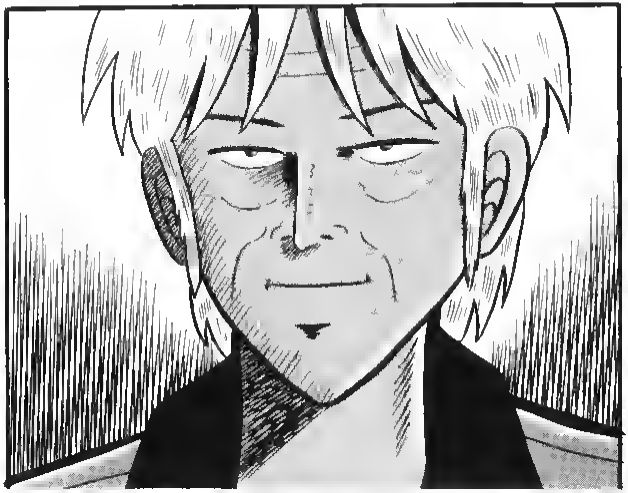
IN TOTAL
THERE ARE NINE TILES ALL THREE OF YOU DISCARDED AND I DREW TWICE MYSELF.

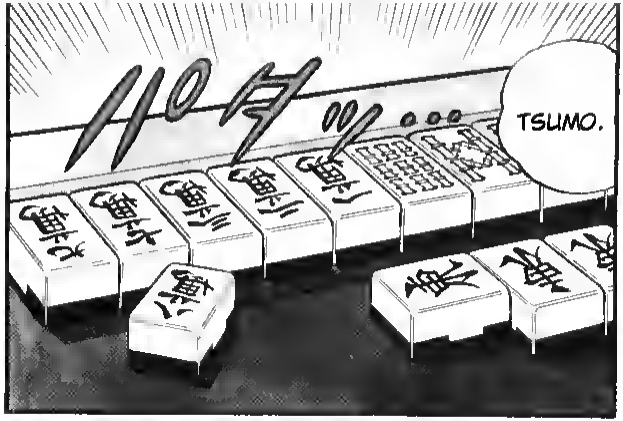
RIGHT TEN?
THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS TO CALL ON TILES

FOR SURE HE'S INCREDIBLE, THIS GUY

HE HASN'T FALLEN IN ABILITY
WHAT A GUY.


WHY IS A PERSON OF YOUR CALIBER RIDING THE FLOW OF THE TILES LIKE THAT




TSUMO.

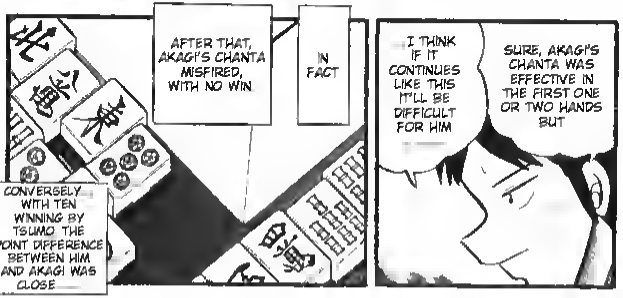
YEAH
CHANTA AGAIN

AKAGI SHIGERU...!!
WHAT'RE YOU UP TO...?

THREE ROUNDS AS DEALER
ONE, TWO

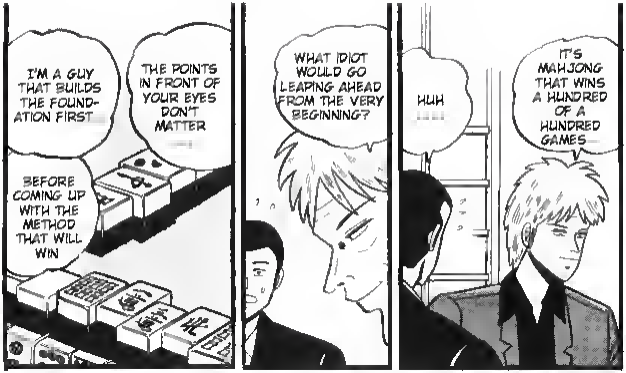
CHAPTER
17
A NARROW
PATH

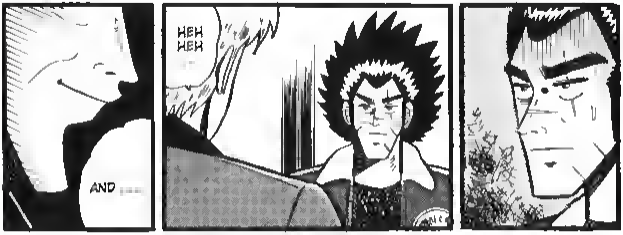
WELL
HIROYUKI, WHAT'S THIS MEAN?


AFTER THAT, AKAGI'S CHANTA MISFIRED, WITH NO WIN
IN FACT
CONVERSELY WITH TEN WINNING BY TSUMO THE POINT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIM AND AKAGI WAS CLOSE
I THINK IF IT CONTINUES LIKE THIS IT'LL BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM
SURE, AKAGI'S CHANTA WAS EFFECTIVE IN THE FIRST ONE OR TWO HANDS BUT

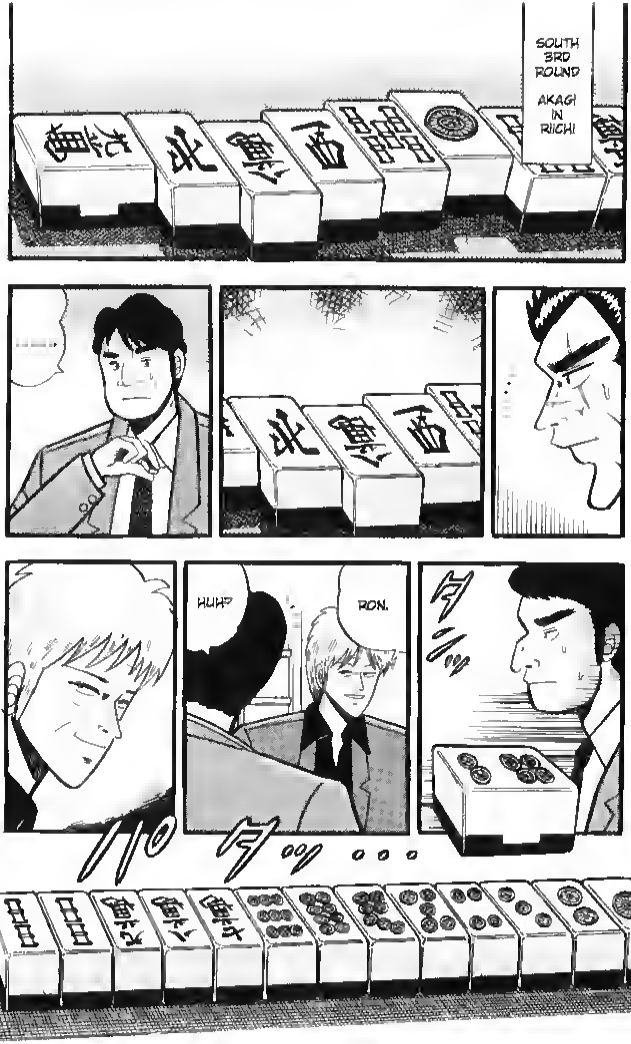
THIS WILL BE FINE
SHOULDN'T YOU BE PLAYING A MORE NORMAL STYLE?
HUH?
UM AKAGI
SOUTH 1ST ROUND
YEAH?

SINCE I'M ONLY MEASURING HIM...
I'M NOT GOING TO, YET
YEAH...
MEASURING...?
IT'S NOT LUCKY OR UNLUCKY MAHJONG...
THE MAHJONG I'M PLAYING RIGHT NOW IS THE MAHJONG YOU GUYS NORMALLY PLAY
SIGH...

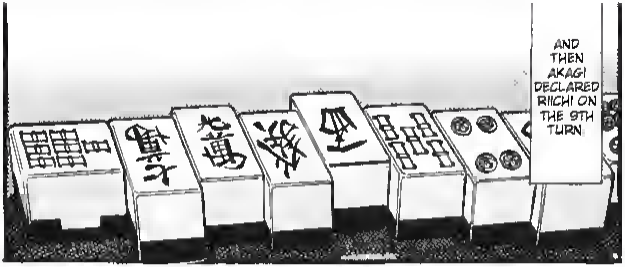

I'M A GUY THAT BUILDS THE FOUND-ATION FIRST
BEFORE COMING UP WITH THE METHOD THAT WILL WIN
THE POINTS IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES DON'T MATTER
WHAT IDIOT WOULD GO LEAPING AHEAD FROM THE VERY BEGINNING?
HUH .....
IT'S MAHJONG THAT WINS A HUNDRED OF A HUNDRED GAMES


AND .....
HEH HEH

WOULDN'T SUIT ME .....
JUMPING AND LEAPING FORWARD, WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING THE STRENGTHS OF MY OPPONENT


SOUTH 3RD ROUND
AKAGI IN RICH!
HUH?
RON.

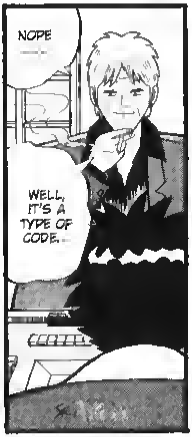
TEN NOTICED SOMETHING HERE...
WELL, I THOUGHT IT WAS TIME FOR A BIT OF A CHANGE ABOUT NOW
YEAH
YOU'VE ALREADY DECIDED TO STOP GOING FOR CHANTA?
HUH?
?
OH, SORRY
I DON'T HAVE ANY WORD TILES...
SOUTH 3RD ROUND
ダン!!


AND THEN AKAGI DECLARED RIICHI ON THE 9TH TURN.

YEAH?
IT'S NOT A COINCIDENCE, IS IT...

AKAGI

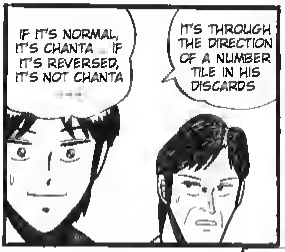
I WOULDN'T HAVE KNOWN WHAT TO DO IF NOBODY SPOTTED IT.
I'M GLAD YOU SAW IT...
IT'D BE SAD TO BE PLAYING WITH THREE WORTHLESS PLAYERS

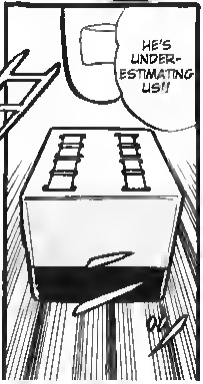

NOPE...
WELL, IT'S A TYPE OF CODE...

IN BRIEF...
HIROYUKI, WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT...?

CODE...?
...?

WHETHER OR NOT HE'S GOING FOR CHANTA
WITH HIS DISCARDS
IT SOUNDS LIKE AKAGI'S BEEN TELLING US SO FAR.....

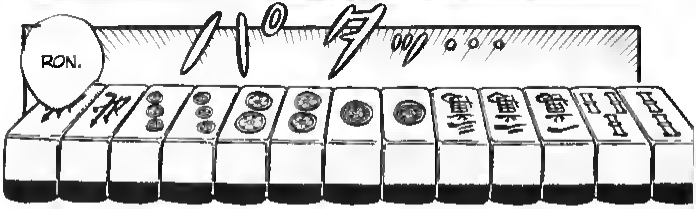

IF IT'S NORMAL, IT'S CHANTA... IF IT'S REVERSED, IT'S NOT CHANTA
IT'S THROUGH THE DIRECTION OF A NUMBER TILE IN HIS DISCARDS


HE'S UNDER-ESTIMATING US!!

SO THAT'S WHAT HE MEANT BY MEASURING, A WHILE AGO.....

HAS TO DO WITH HIS CHANTA HANDS.....?
THEN, THIS...

A MORON?
WHAT ARE YOU?


RON.

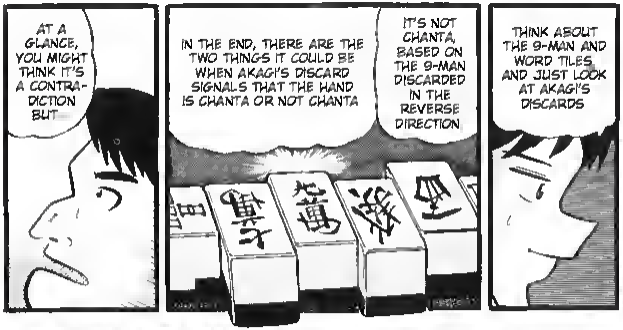
WHICH GOES ALONG WITH ME CALLING YOU A MORON
IF YOU SAY IT, YOU'RE JUST GOING TO EMBARRASS YOURSELF

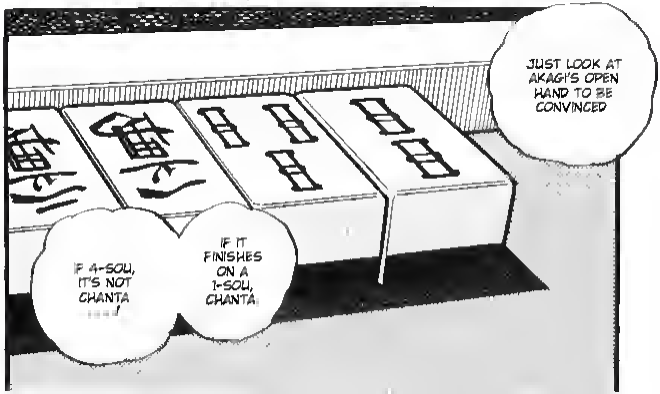
HEY
SHUT UP

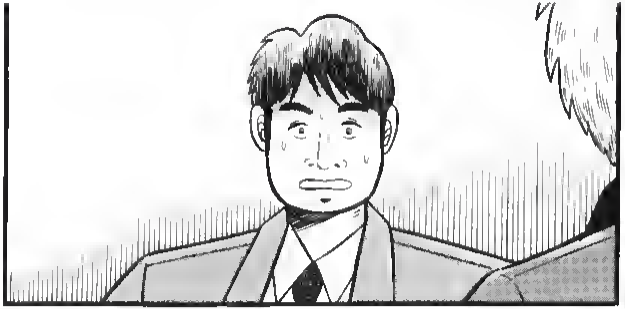
BECAUSE SOMETHING SEEMED FISHY ABOUT THE SHAPE OF THINGS AT THE TIME.
FOR INSTANCE TEN OVER THERE STOPPED HIMSELF FROM DEALING THE 4-SOU

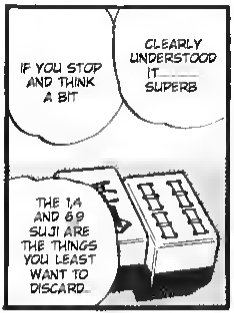
七萬
八萬
YES, WELL THAT'S BASICALLY RIGHT...
HIROYUKI WASN'T IT CHANTA...?
UH...
THAT'S NOT WRONG...
AS I SAID A MOMENT AGO, AKAGI TOLD WHETHER OR NOT HE HAD CHANTA BY THE DIRECTION OF A NUMBER TILE...
BUT... IF YOU RECALL...
JUST... THIS TIME IT WAS A MATTER OF APPLICATION...

THAT'S WHAT HE SAID SO
OH
I'M OUT OF WORD TILES
OH, SORRY.
WHEN AKAGI GOT RID OF THE 9-MAN ON THE 7TH TURN


AT A GLANCE, YOU MIGHT THINK IT'S A CONTRA-DICTION BUT
IN THE END, THERE ARE THE TWO THINGS IT COULD BE WHEN AKAGI'S DISCARD SIGNALS THAT THE HAND IS CHANTA OR NOT CHANTA
IT'S NOT CHANTA, BASED ON THE 9-MAN DISCARDED IN THE REVERSE DIRECTION
THINK ABOUT THE 9-MAN AND WORD TILES AND JUST LOOK AT AKAGI'S DISCARDS


JUST LOOK AT AKAGI'S OPEN HAND TO BE CONVINCED
IF 4-SOU, IT'S NOT CHANTA
IF IT FINISHES ON A 1-SOU, CHANTA




IF YOU STOP AND THINK A BIT
CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD IT—— SUPERB
THE 1,4 AND 6,9 SUJI ARE THE THINGS YOU LEAST WANT TO DISCARD

THAT BOY ON THE SIDELINES UNDERSTANDS
SEE

HEH HEH HEH

RIGHT,
TEN?

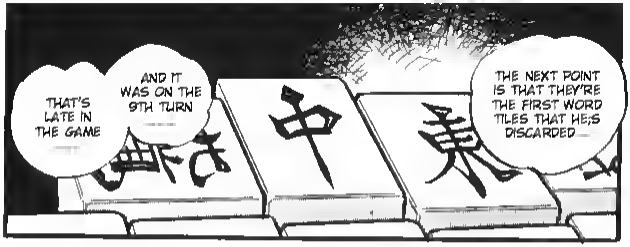
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER
AND YOU WENT AHEAD AND DISCARDED THE 4-SOU. ARE YOU USING YOUR HEAD...?

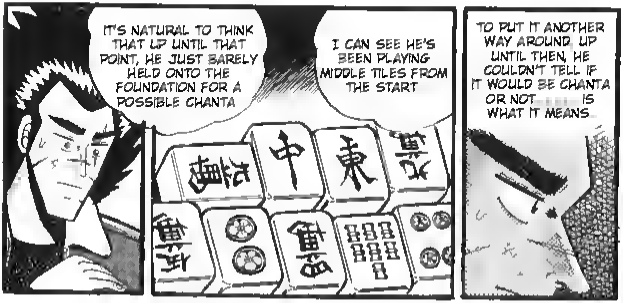
THE SOUTH 3RD ROUND CONTINUES
AKAGI IS IN RICHI (CONTINUING AS DEALER)

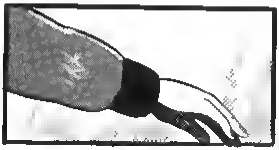
IS THERE A CODE IN THERE TOO...?
チャラ・・

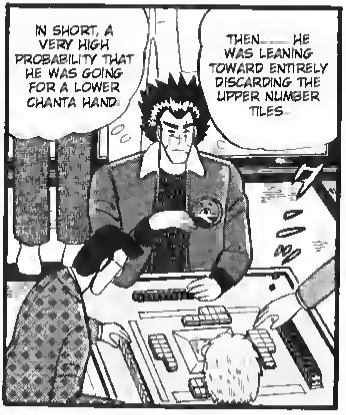
THE WORD TILES ARE IN REVERSE
IF IT'S AS HE SAID
IT'S NOT CHANTA
FIRST OF ALL

THIS IS THE LAST ONE...
YEAH...
GO AHEAD AND SHOOT DOWN THIS SILLY GAME TOO


THAT'S LATE IN THE GAME
AND IT WAS ON THE 9TH TURN
THE NEXT POINT IS THAT THEY'RE THE FIRST WORD TILES THAT HE;S DISCARDED

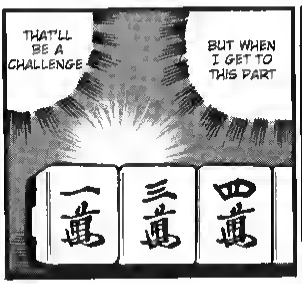

IT'S NATURAL TO THINK THAT UP UNTIL THAT POINT, HE JUST BARELY HELD ONTO THE FOUNDATION FOR A POSSIBLE CHANTA
I CAN SEE HE'S BEEN PLAYING MIDDLE TILES FROM THE START
TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY AROUND. UP UNTIL THEN, HE COULDN'T TELL IF IT WOULD BE CHANTA OR NOT..... IS WHAT IT MEANS.....

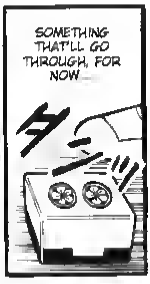



IN SHORT, A VERY HIGH PROBABILITY THAT HE WAS GOING FOR A LOWER CHANTA HAND.
THEN..... HE WAS LEANING TOWARD ENTIRELY DISCARDING THE UPPER NUMBER TILES.

IS HE GOING FOR THE 1,4 SUJI AGAIN?

カミツ
TEN'S HAND
一萬
三萬
四萬
伍萬
六萬
七萬
八萬
九萬


THAT'LL BE A CHALLENGE
BUT WHEN I GET TO THIS PART
一萬
三萬
四萬


SOMETHING THAT'LL GO THROUGH, FOR NOW...
カミツ

IT STILL WON'T BE ENOUGH OF A POINT DIFFERENCE TO OVERTURN THE GAME...
IF I GET MY WIN FROM AKAGI AFTER HE'S DECLARED RICHI

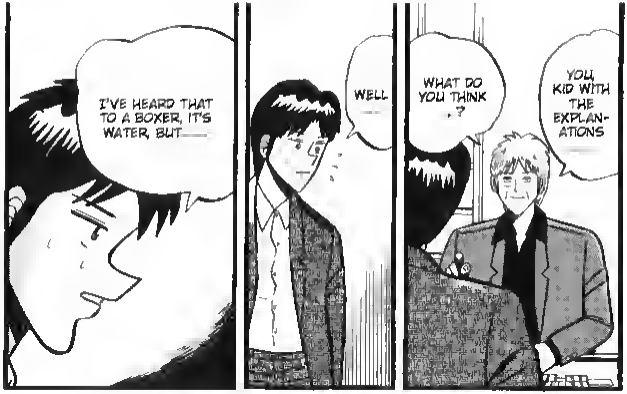
YES?
MASAKI

ピッ
北

WHAT'S THIS NOW...
HOW-EVER...

SHOULD I ORDER SOME SUSHI OR SOMETHING...?
HUH...?
UM.
IS THERE ANYTHING TO EAT...?
ALL OF YOU...
HEH. YOU'RE STIFFENING UP...
SAFE TILE
SAFE TILE
FUGU-SASHI...?
UM.
FUGU-SASHI WOULD BE GOOD...
SUSHI WILL DO
UM.
I DON'T WANT TO EAT.

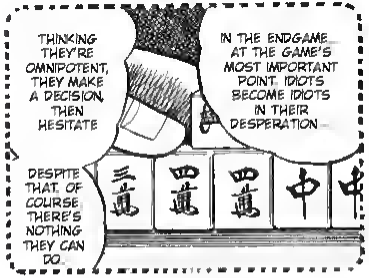
HUH?
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE MOST DELICIOUS THING IN THE WORLD IS?
UM, SINCE IT'S ALREADY 3AM... IT MIGHT BE A BIT HARD TO GET FUGU-SASHI
UH .?
WHAT ABOUT YOU IN THE CORNER OVER THERE?
FOIS DE GRAS OR SOME-THING...
FUGU-SASHI?
WHAT ARE YOU, A MORON ?


I'VE HEARD THAT TO A BOXER, IT'S WATER, BUT——
WELL——
WHAT DO YOU THINK——?
YOU, KID WITH THE EXPLAN-ATIONS——

AM I TALKING TO A BUNCH OF RETARDED CHILDREN?
WHAT THE HELL!
?

THAT WAS CLOSE
TOO BAD, TOO BAD
OH…
キュッ
IF YOU PLAY MAHJONG, YOU SHOULD KNOW

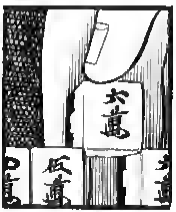
AND THOSE THAT, WITH THEIR TRICKS THAT GET THEM NOWHERE
THERE'S CRAZY GUYS IN THIS WORLD
FOR INSTANCE, IN MAHJONG
WOULD END UP EVEN BETTING THEIR LIFE ON MORE THAN THEIR FAIR SHARE OF A HUGE AMOUNT OF MONEY


THINKING THEY'RE OMNIPOTENT, THEY MAKE A DECISION, THEN HESITATE
IN THE ENDGAME AT THE GAME'S MOST IMPORTANT POINT, IDIOTS BECOME IDIOTS IN THEIR DESPERATION
DESPITE THAT, OF COURSE THERE'S NOTHING THEY CAN DO

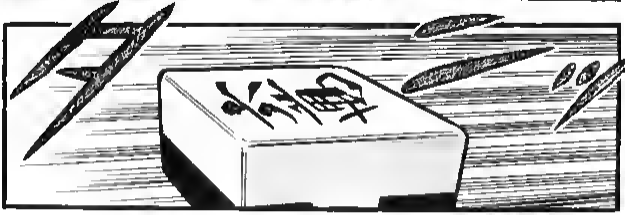
THEY'RE STUPID, BUT
WELL SINCE THAT'S THE KIND OF GUY THEY ARE
THE WAY THEY WANT TO WIN IS AMAZING

IT'S LIKE THE TILE THEY PLAY HAS ALREADY BEEN CUT FROM THEIR VERY SOUL

THE TILE THAT SOUL IS RIDING ON...

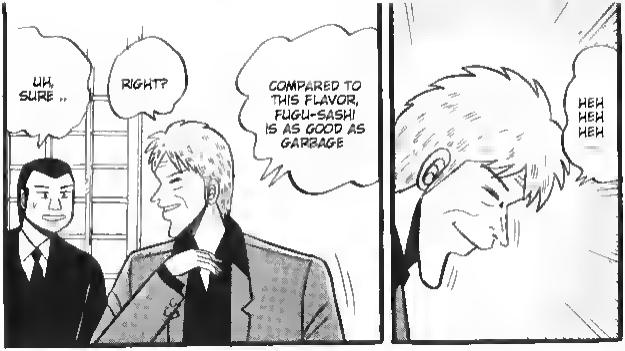


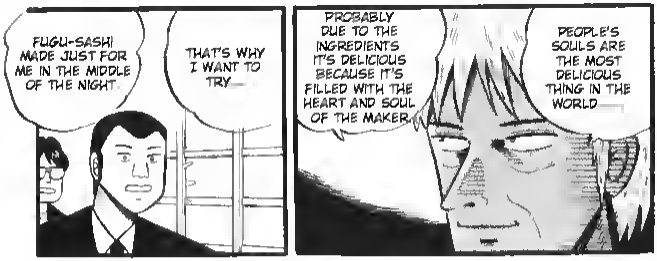
TO WIN WITH



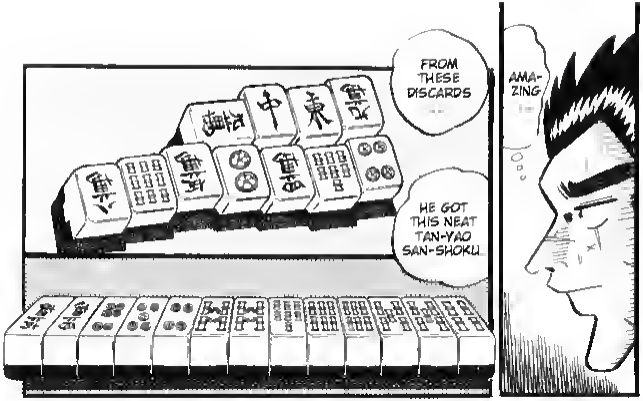
IS JUST LIKE DEVOURING A PERSON'S SOUL...

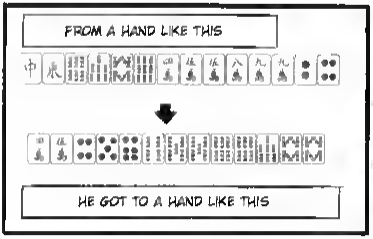
FU
HUH
.....
??


UH, SURE ..
RIGHT?
COMPARED TO THIS FLAVOR, FUGU-SASHI IS AS GOOD AS GARBAGE
HEH HEH HEH

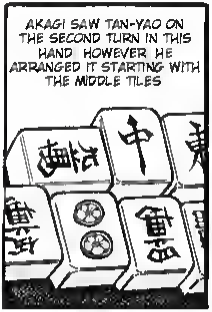

FUGU-SASHI MADE JUST FOR ME IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO TRY
PROBABLY DUE TO THE INGREDIENTS IT'S DELICIOUS BECAUSE IT'S FILLED WITH THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE MAKER.
PEOPLE'S SOULS ARE THE MOST DELICIOUS THING IN THE WORLD

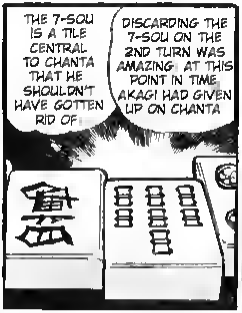
IF YOU UNDERSTAND, THE HURRY UP AND GET IT READY, DAMN IT!!!
Y-YESSIR.
UH, THAT'S RIGHT
RIGHT?

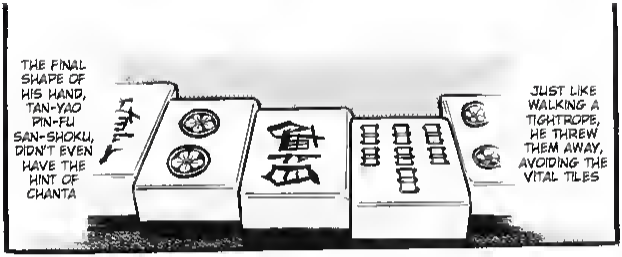

FROM THESE DISCARDS ...
HE GOT THIS NEAT TAN-YAO SAN-SHOKU.
AMA-ZING


FROM A HAND LIKE THIS
HE GOT TO A HAND LIKE THIS

PERHAPS
WHICH MEANS
HE GOT MOST OF THE WORD TILES AND END TILES OUT OF HIS HAND AT THE END


AKAGI SAW TAN-YAO ON THE SECOND TURN IN THIS HAND. HOWEVER, HE ARRANGED IT STARTING WITH THE MIDDLE TILES


THE 7-SOU IS A TILE CENTRAL TO CHANTA THAT HE SHOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN RID OF.
DISCARDING THE 7-SOU ON THE 2ND TURN WAS AMAZING. AT THIS POINT IN TIME, AKAGI HAD GIVEN UP ON CHANTA

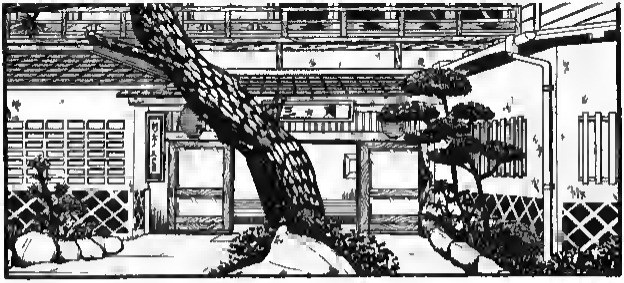

THE FINAL SHAPE OF HIS HAND, TAN-YAO PIN-FU SAN-SHOKU, DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THE HINT OF CHANTA
JUST LIKE WALKING A TIGHTROPE, HE THREW THEM AWAY, AVOIDING THE VITAL TILES

.....BUT.....!!
I'VE BEEN LOOKING AT THIS MAN LIKE HE'S PLAYING FRIVOLOUSLY ..... BUT THIS KIND OF THING IS BEYOND HUMAN.....

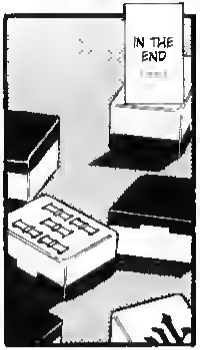
HUH?
.....
AKAGI HAS A WEAK POINT TOO .....!!
TEN
HIRO-YUKI

THIS IS INTERESTING.
OH.

CHAPTER 12
THE MAN IN THE REALM OF THE GODS
SUNTORY
SHOEI



THE 28TH GAME ENDED WITH AKAGI IN 1ST AND TEN IN 2ND PLACE


IN THE END

WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY AKAGI'S WEAK POINT?
YOU SAID SOMETHING A LITTLE WHILE AGO

TEN

SORRY, BUT
IT'S HARD TO DESCRIBE RIGHT NOW BUT IT'S JUST A FEELING I HAVE...

IN HIS HEART, AKAGI WANTS A REAL FIGHT...
WHAT HE WANTS MOST OF ALL ISN'T TO WIN BY JUST STARING OFF INTO SPACE LIKE THIS...
HE WANTS TO BE GOING ALL OR NOTHING MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE.
HE'S THINKING THIS IS A LOAD OF CRAP
BUT... DEEP INSIDE AKAGI
AKAGI IS ADVANCING HIS STARTING HANDS PERFECTLY RIGHT NOW WITH THE SHAPE THEY'RE CLOSEST TO...
FOR EXAMPLE...
WITHOUT SHOWING ANY OPENINGS

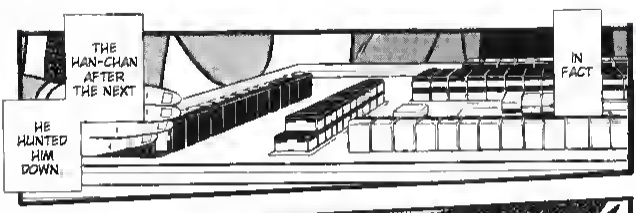
THAT'S MY ONLY ADVANTAGE
AKAGI'S TRUE NATURE
THAT CHILDISH SENSIBILITY.

HUH...?
THAT'S ENOUGH...
HUH..?
YOU GUYS EAT THE REST
ゴロ
ONE BITE IS ENOUGH
THAT'S ONLY ONE BITE

WHAT WERE YOU THINKING...
IT WAS PRETTY UNREASONABLE OF HIM TO MAKE US GET THIS FOR HIM...
HEY...
テロ
テロ
WHY HASN'T AKAGI BEEN IN THE LEAD SINCE HIS FIRST GAME...?
YES...
IS ACCOMPANIED BY SELFISHNESS...
A PURE, HIGH TALENT...
UH...
CHAIRMAN...
IF YOU'RE GETTING ANGRY ABOUT IT, JUST LET IT GO...
NOW, NOW...
WELL... I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING HIS VICTORIES PILE UP...
HEH HEH...
THAT MAN'S FALLEN TO SECOND PLACE
HEH HEH... ONCE AKAGI TOOK THE LEAD WITHOUT A SINGLE SLIP-UP

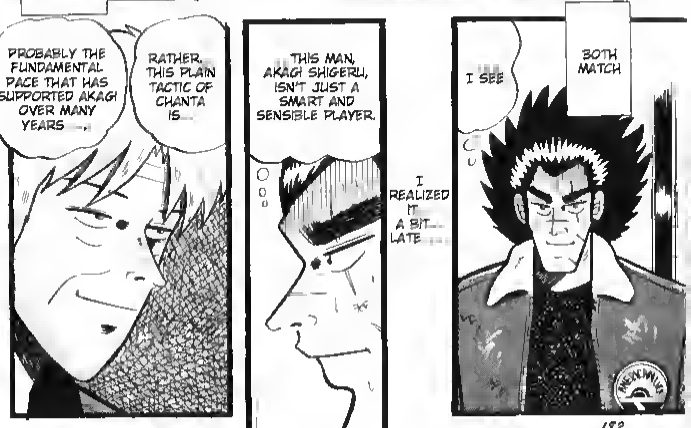
AKAGI CONTINUED ON THE OFFENSIVE EVEN UPON ENTERING THE 27TH MATCH
AND THEN
カミッ
TSUMO

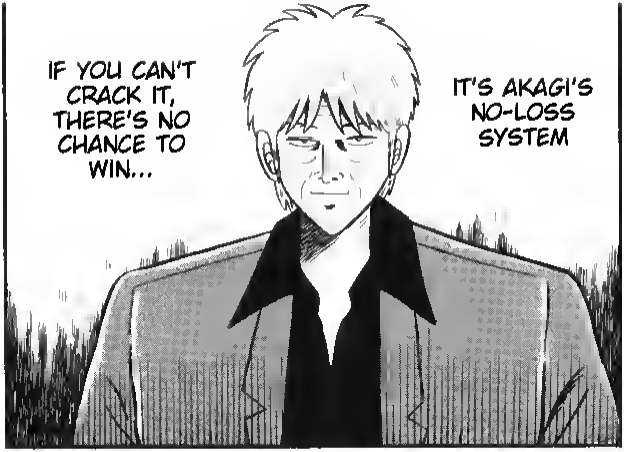
AGAIN?
UH
HEH HEH
AKAGI
WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING...?
AS USUAL, LOTS OF WINS BIASED TOWARDS CHANTA
HE'S NOT BEING AS THOROUGH AS LAST TIME
TEN... WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE IN ANOTHER TWO... OR THREE GAMES.
RIGHT NOW... I'M SPREADING MY NET...
I'M NOT JUST WINNING WITH CHANTA...
TEN'S NOTICED IT TOO, BUT...

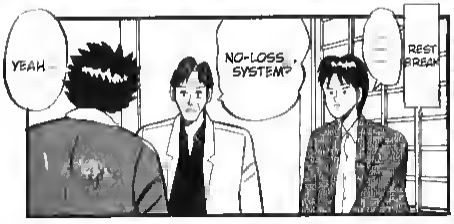

THE HAN-CHAN AFTER THE NEXT
HE HUNTED HIM DOWN.
IN FACT

TEN WAS STRUGGLING. HE CONTINUED TO RUN AWAY BY WINING WITH A SMALL NUMBER OF POINTS

AKAGI WAS INCREASINGLY SAFE AND KEPT THE LEAD.
ON THE OTHER HAND

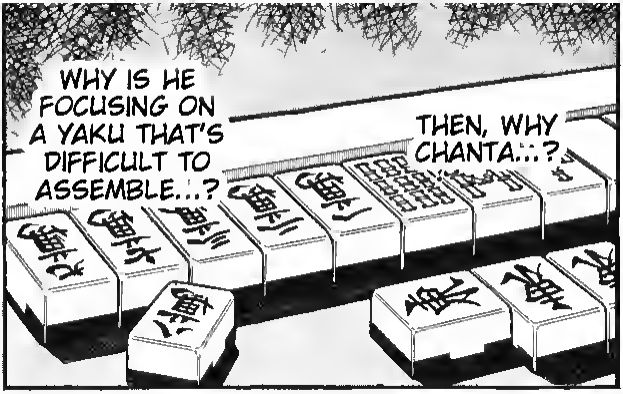

PROBABLY THE FUNDAMENTAL PACE THAT HAS SUPPORTED AKAGI OVER MANY YEARS...
RATHER, THIS PLAIN TACTIC OF CHANTA IS...
THIS MAN, AKAGI SHIGERU, ISN'T JUST A SMART AND SENSIBLE PLAYER.
I REALIZED IT A BIT LATE...
I SEE
BOTH MATCH

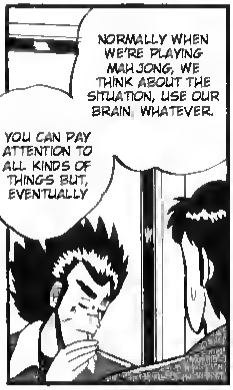

IF YOU CAN'T CRACK IT, THERE'S NO CHANCE TO WIN...
IT'S AKAGI'S NO-LOSS SYSTEM


YEAH...
NO-LOSS SYSTEM?
REST BREAK

HIM PICKING UP WINS WITH CHANTA...
THAT IS TO SAY...

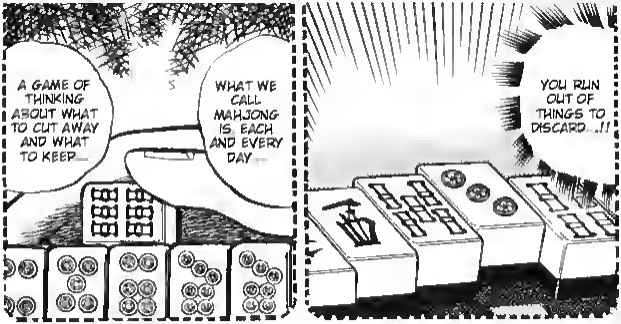
...IT'S A TINY THING, BUT IT'S BEEN BUILDING IN THE FOURTH HAN-CHAN


WHY IS HE FOCUSING ON A YAKU THAT'S DIFFICULT TO ASSEMBLE...?
THEN, WHY CHANTA...?

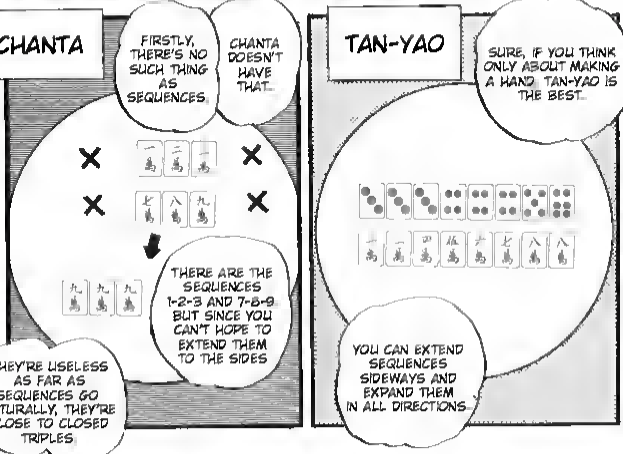

NORMALLY WHEN WE'RE PLAYING MAHJONG, WE THINK ABOUT THE SITUATION, USE OUR BRAIN, WHATEVER.
YOU CAN PAY ATTENTION TO ALL KINDS OF THINGS BUT, EVENTUALLY

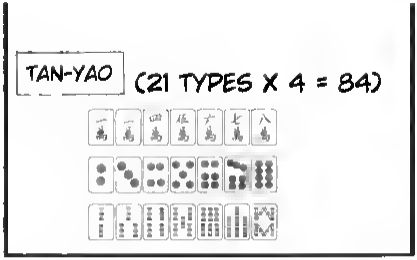
IT'S SIMPLE, REALLY
IT'S AN EXAGGERATION TO CALL IT THE ESSENCE, BUT

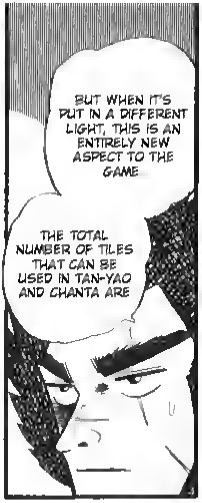
AT LEAST, TO AKAGI'S WAY OF THINKING
IT'S BECAUSE CHANTA IS THE YAKU CLOSEST TO THE ESSENCE OF MAHJONG

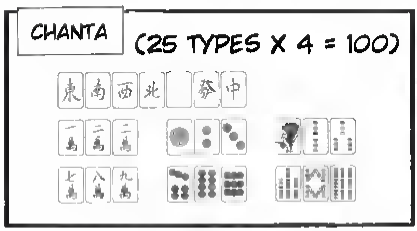

A GAME OF THINKING ABOUT WHAT TO CUT AWAY AND WHAT TO KEEP...
WHAT WE CALL MAHJONG IS EACH AND EVERY DAY...
YOU RUN OUT OF THINGS TO DISCARD...!!

AND HAS ADOPTED HIS OWN PRINCIPLE FOR VICTORY.
KNOWS THIS IN THE PIT OF HIS STOMACH.
AKAGI


CHANTA
FIRSTLY, THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS SEQUENCES.
CHANTA DOESN'T HAVE THAT...
THERE ARE THE SEQUENCES 1-2-3 AND 7-8-9. BUT SINCE YOU CAN'T HOPE TO EXTEND THEM TO THE SIDES
THEY'RE USELESS AS FAR AS SEQUENCES GO NATURALLY, THEY'RE CLOSE TO CLOSED TRIPLES
TAN-YAO
SURE, IF YOU THINK ONLY ABOUT MAKING A HAND. TAN-YAO IS THE BEST...
YOU CAN EXTEND SEQUENCES SIDEWAYS AND EXPAND THEM IN ALL DIRECTIONS

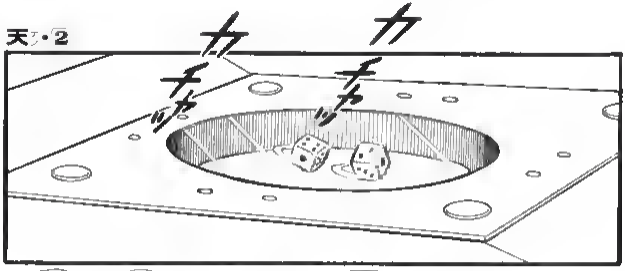

TAN-YAO
(21 TYPES X 4 = 84)

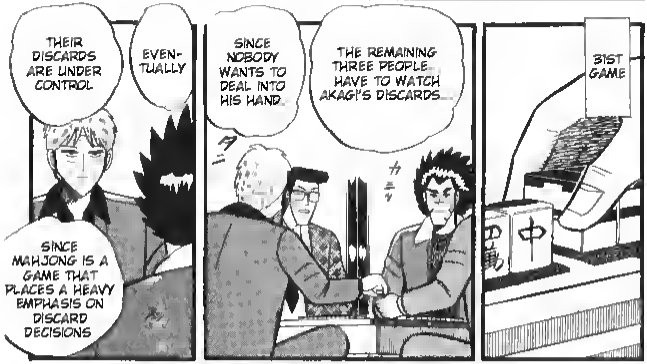

BUT WHEN IT'S PUT IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT, THIS IS AN ENTIRELY NEW ASPECT TO THE GAME
THE TOTAL NUMBER OF TILES THAT CAN BE USED IN TAN-YAO AND CHANTA ARE


CHANTA
(25 TYPES X 4 = 100)

100 TILES THAT PEOPLE WANT TO DISCARD
THE SECOND HALF OF IT IS NO PROBLEM THROUGH SHEER NUMBERS ALONE AND THE FIRST HALF IS THE 100 TILES THAT WILL FLOW OUT FROM PEOPLE'S HANDS
HOW-EVER
OR TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, IT'S THAT MANY MORE TILES TO WAIT ON.
THERE ARE 16 MORE TILES THAT CAN BE USED IN CHANTA

FOR INSTANCE, A PLAYER LIKE AKAGI
AND THEN, HERE A STRONG PLAYER
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEIR WAY OF PLAYING IS ALL ABOUT GETTING CHANTA?


カチャ
カチャ


THEIR DISCARDS ARE UNDER CONTROL
EVEN-TUALLY
SINCE MAHJONG IS A GAME THAT PLACES A HEAVY EMPHASIS ON DISCARD DECISIONS
SINCE NOBODY WANTS TO DEAL INTO HIS HAND...
THE REMAINING THREE PEOPLE HAVE TO WATCH AKAGI'S DISCARDS...
ク…
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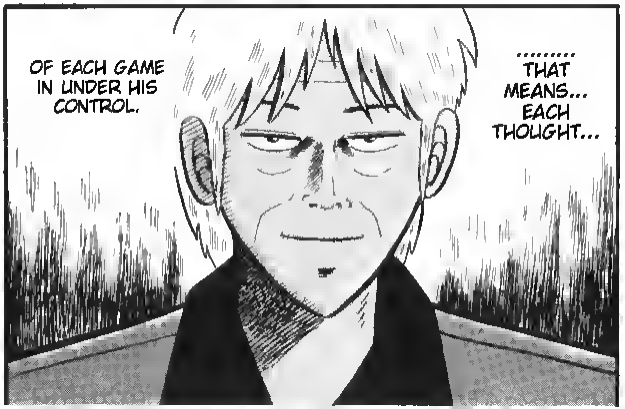
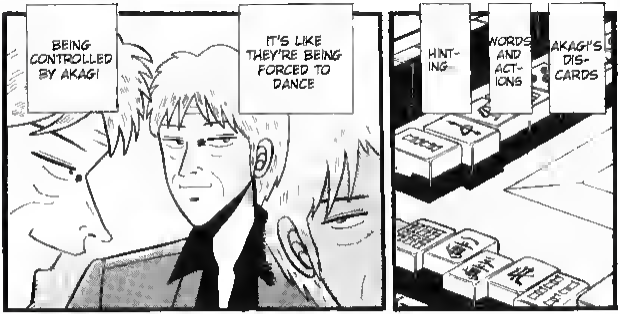
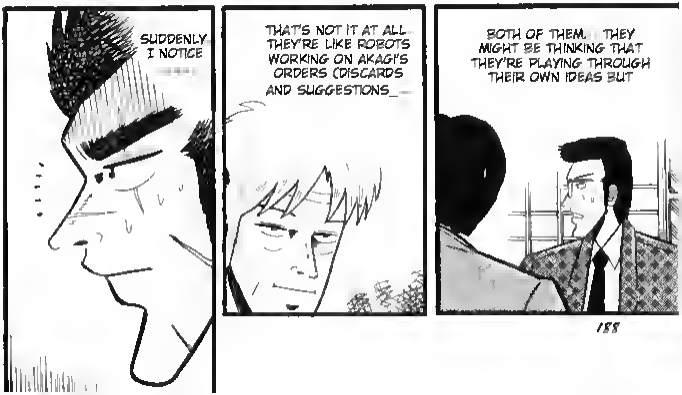
31ST GAME


OF EACH GAME IN UNDER HIS CONTROL.
.....
THAT MEANS... EACH THOUGHT...

ITS REAL EFFECTIVE-NESS
IT SHOWS
AND THEN AGAINST PEOPLE WHO AREN'T GOOD PLAYERS


BEING CONTROLLED BY AKAGI
IT'S LIKE THEY'RE BEING FORCED TO DANCE
HINT-ING
WORDS AND ACT-IONS
AKAGI'S DIS-CARDS


SUDDENLY I NOTICE
THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL. THEY'RE LIKE ROBOTS WORKING ON AKAGI'S ORDERS (DISCARDS AND SUGGESTIONS)
BOTH OF THEM... THEY MIGHT BE THINKING THAT THEY'RE PLAYING THROUGH THEIR OWN IDEAS BUT

.....
IT'S THREE AGAINST ONE.....

SOUTH 3RD ROUND
TEN'S DISCARDS
THE 3-PIN WAS GOTTEN RID OF EARLY ON, SO IT'S LIKELY TO BE 2-3-3.
BUT ACTUALLY, THE THING TO WATCH OUT FOR THE MOST IS PROBABLY THE 1,4-PIN.
1,4-SOU OR 6,9-SOU
FIRST, THE WAY THAT 5-SOU WAS DISCARDED INDICATES URA-SUJI.
HMM.
AKAGI'S PREDI-CTION
THE 2-PIN MIGHT PASS BUT THE 1-PIN PROBABLY WON'T... I WONDER WHAT I SHOULD DO...
I'D LIKE TO DEAL WITH THE 1-2-PIN ONE-SIDED WAIT BUT
AKAGI'S HAND
IN THAT CASE

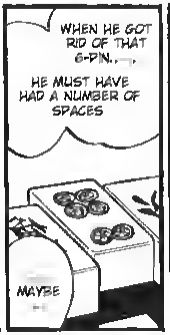
IT WOULD BE A LIKELY DISCARD FROM 2-2-4-6

DISCARD THE 2 AND SETTLE FOR A BROAD WAIT WITH 2-4-6?

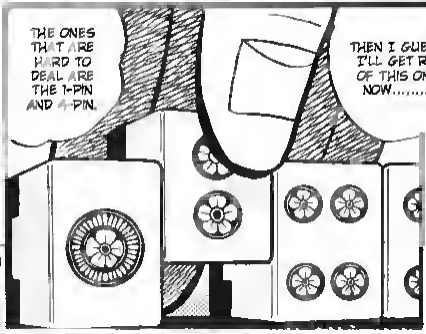
DISCARD THE 6 AND PON HIS WAY TO TENPAI, GOING FOR TOI-TOI WITH 2-2-4?

HE EVENTUALLY CHOSE TO DISCARD THE 6 FOR TOI-TOI

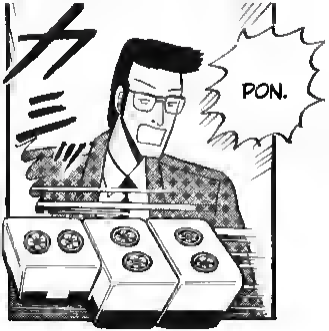
HIS CURRENT HAND IS 2-2-4



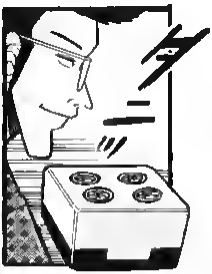
IT LOOKS LIKE A TYPICAL WAY OF PLAYING AROUND A PAIR OF THE DORA (CHUN)
... FROM THE WAY KAMICHA IS WORKING HIS NUMBER TILES
HE SEEMS TO BE GOING FOR CHII-TOI-TSU OR TOI-TOI WITH THE DORA

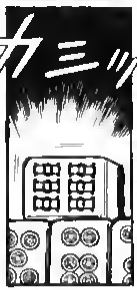


HEH, HEH... THIS WAY, THE 4-PIN WILL COME OUT.
HE'S NOT PREDICTING ANYONE'S TENPAI.

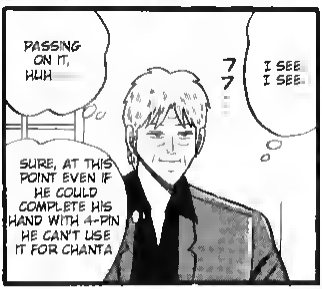

PON.

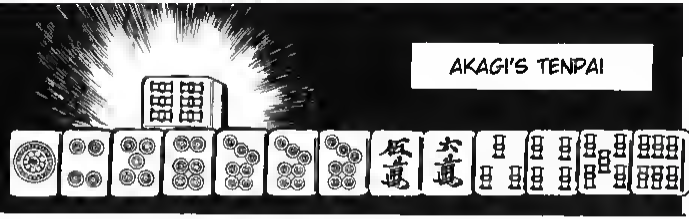
TEN'S TENPAI. 1,4-PIN WAIT

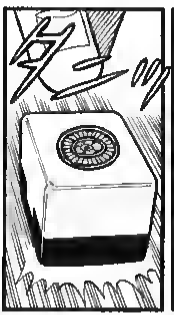


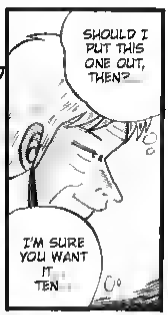


HEH HEH

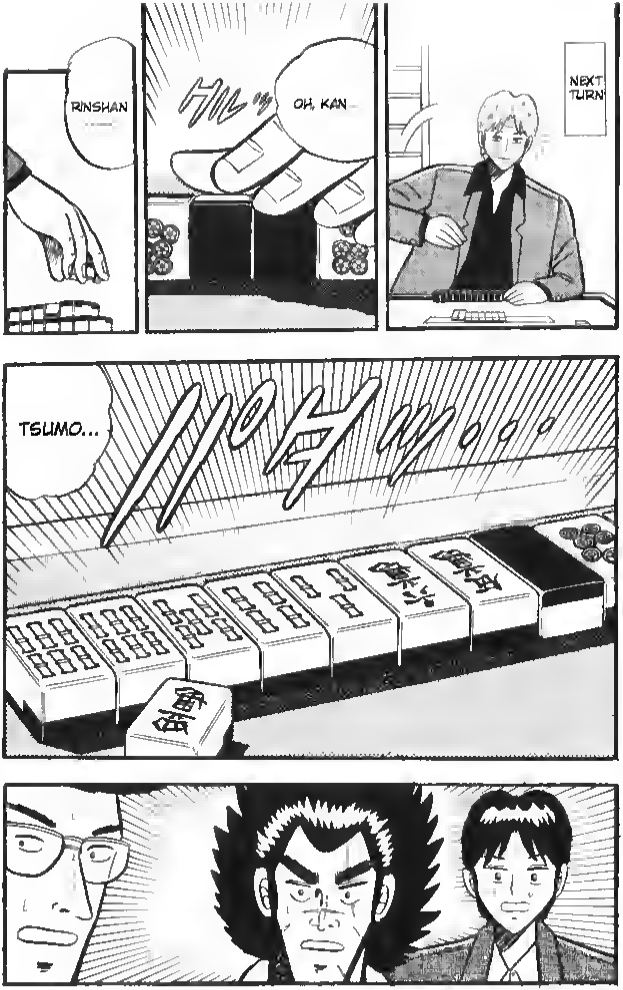

PASSING ON IT, HUH
SURE, AT THIS POINT EVEN IF HE COULD COMPLETE HIS HAND WITH 4-PIN HE CAN'T USE IT FOR CHANTA
I SEE. I SEE.



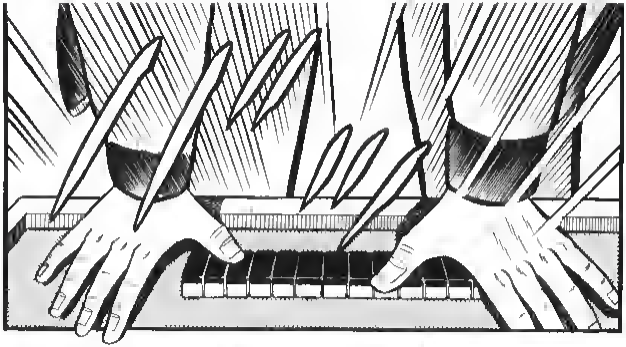




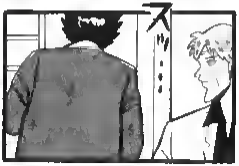
AFTER THE 4-PIN HE CAN'T WIN IN THE SAME TURN


RINSHAN
OH, KAN
NEXT TURN
TSUMO...

DEALER HANE-MAN
TAN-YAO RINSHAN-TSUMO 4-DORA
4 OF THEM!
THE KAN DORA IS
HEH HEH HEH
UH
AND LUCK'S ON HIS SIDE, TOO
AKAGI'S EASILY CONTROLLING THE TWO ON EITHER SIDE
THAT'S INCRE-DIBLE
TO CAUSE AN UPSET
IT ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY
SO FAR THE FLOW OF THE GAME HAS BEEN WITH AKAGI



Ooo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…

I'VE GOTTA GO FRESHEN UP
WAIT A MINUTE

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バシャッ

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ハァ
ハァ
ハァ
SAWADA
HIRO
TEN
?
HE'S SMILING

JUST NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME I SAW A FLAW IN AKAGI'S PLANS
I CAN SEE A PLACE TO BREAK THROUGH
WHA...!
THE NEXT ROUND OR THE ONE AFTER THAT...
キュッ
I'LL GIVE HIM A GOOD SCARE.
AMERICAN

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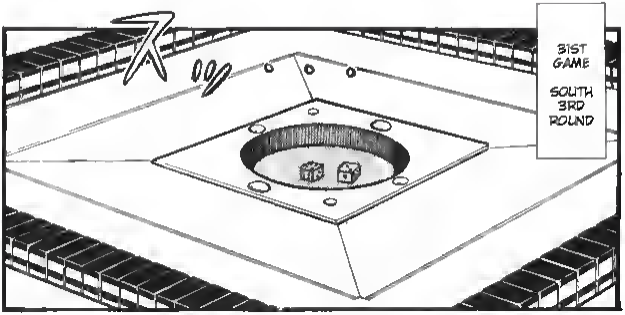
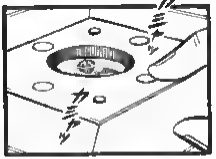
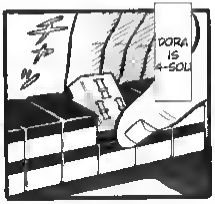
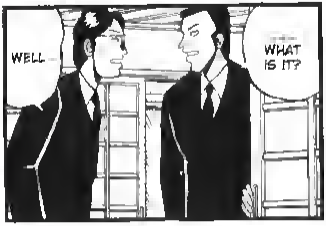
CHAPTER 19
THE REALM OF REASON
南


31ST GAME
SOUTH 3RD ROUND



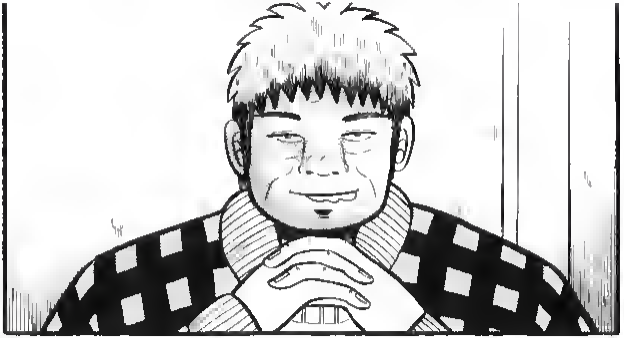

DORA IS 4-SOU

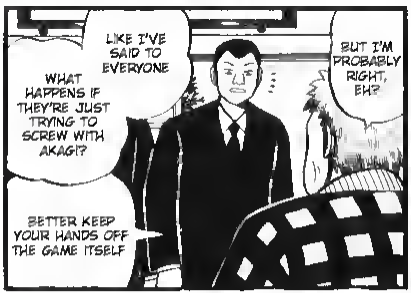
THE DEALER IS AKAGI


WELL...
WHAT IS IT?

EXCUSE ME

UH
A FEW MOMENTS AGO... WHEN HE WENT TO THE WASHROOM
THAT GUY, TEN...
THE NEXT ROUND...
OR THE ONE AFTER THAT...
I'LL GIVE HIM A GOOD SCARE
I GUESS SO...
YOU'D BETTER NOT...
WHAT?
THAT'S WHAT HE SAID...
WHAT DO YOU THINK? SHOULD WE LET AKAGI KNOW?...



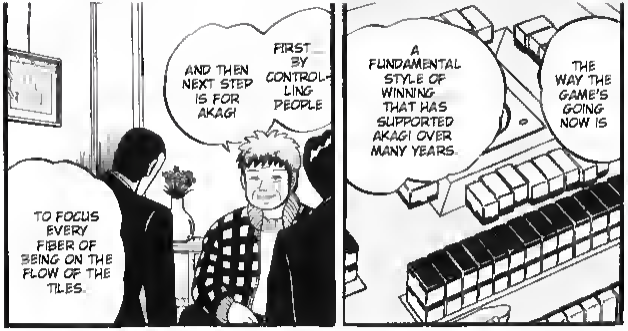

LIKE I'VE SAID TO EVERYONE
WHAT HAPPENS IF THEY'RE JUST TRYING TO SCREW WITH AKAGI?
BETTER KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF THE GAME ITSELF
BUT I'M PROBABLY RIGHT, EH?

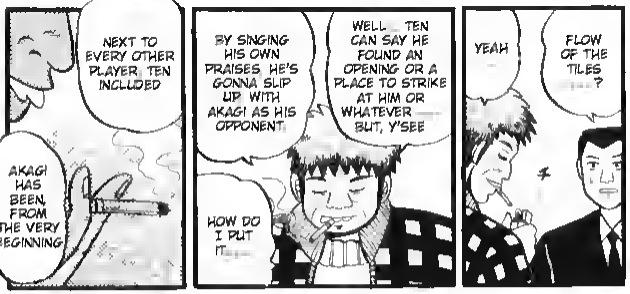
HEH HEH
MUROTA

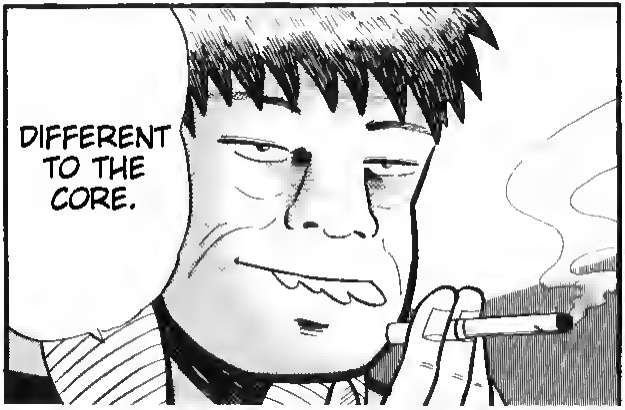
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TEN PICKED UP ON AND IS TRYING TO MAKE USE OF, BUT
DON'T WORRY YOUR-SELVES

THAT'S WHY YOU SHOULD LEAVE IT BE

HEH HEH
IT MIGHT BE
T-THAT WOULDN'T BE GOOD!

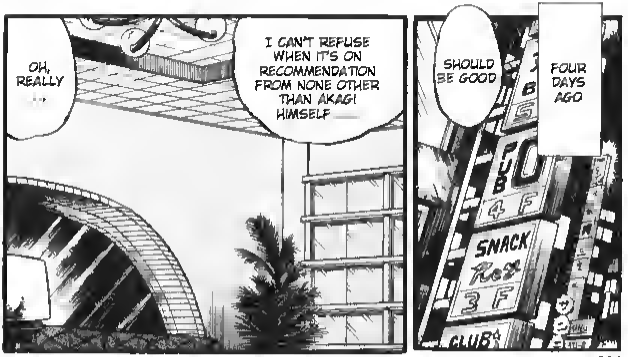

TO FOCUS EVERY FIBER OF BEING ON THE FLOW OF THE TILES.
AND THEN NEXT STEP IS FOR AKAGI
FIRST BY CONTROLLING PEOPLE
A FUNDAMENTAL STYLE OF WINNING THAT HAS SUPPORTED AKAGI OVER MANY YEARS.
THE WAY THE GAME'S GOING NOW IS


AKAGI HAS BEEN FROM THE VERY BEGINNING
NEXT TO EVERY OTHER PLAYER, TEN INCLUDED
HOW DO I PUT IT...
BY SINGING HIS OWN PRAISES, HE'S GONNA SLIP UP WITH AKAGI AS HIS OPPONENT.
WELL... TEN CAN SAY HE FOUND AN OPENING OR A PLACE TO STRIKE AT HIM OR WHATEVER... BUT, Y'SEE
YEAH...
FLOW OF THE TILES...?

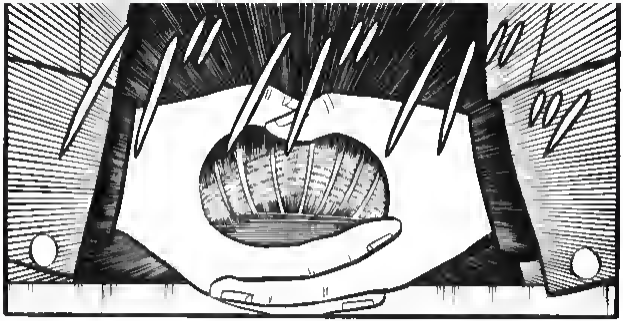

DIFFERENT TO THE CORE.

WEREN'T YOU THERE WITH ME FOUR DAYS AGO?
OH YEAH
HUH?
YEAH
?
HEH HEH
YOU STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND THOUGH, DO YOU?

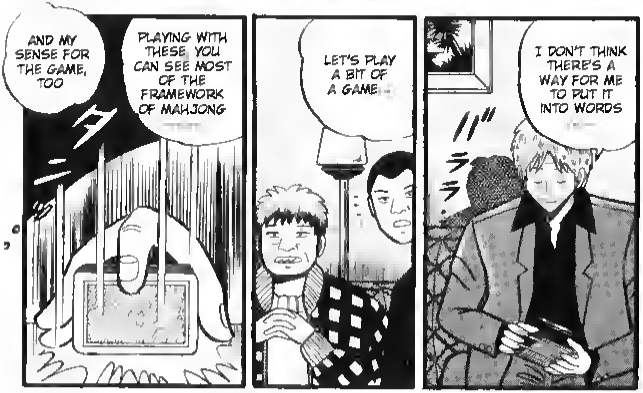
THINK BACK A BIT
IT HAPPENED THAT DAY


OH, REALLY
I CAN'T REFUSE WHEN IT'S ON RECOMMENDATION FROM NONE OTHER THAN AKAGI HIMSELF
SHOULD BE GOOD
FOUR DAYS AGO
4F
SNACK
3F
CLUB

HMM.
BUT IF I PLAYED AGAINST YOU TWICE, I'D LOSE TWICE
HUH
SINCE RIGHT NOW YOU'RE AMONG THE TOP TWO MAHJONG PROS IN THE KANSAI AREA
MUROTA IT'S A RELIEF TO HAVE YOU CONTRACTED OUT TO DO THIS GAME
OH REALLY ?
HOW IN THE WORLD DO YOU YOUR MAHJONG
AKAGI
THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE WANTED TO ASK YOU FOR A LONG TIME
AKAGI



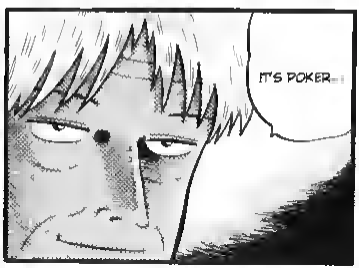
HEH HEH
I'M SURE YOU KNOW...? WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT IS...
EH?

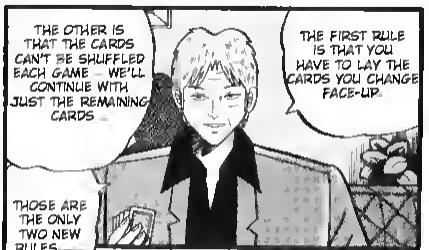

AND MY SENSE FOR THE GAME, TOO
PLAYING WITH THESE, YOU CAN SEE MOST OF THE FRAMEWORK OF MAHJONG
LET'S PLAY A BIT OF A GAME...
I DON'T THINK THERE'S A WAY FOR ME TO PUT IT INTO WORDS

DON' WORRY, IT'S NOTHING MAJOR
OH,

HUH?
OKAY, LET'S PLAY THREE-PLAYER

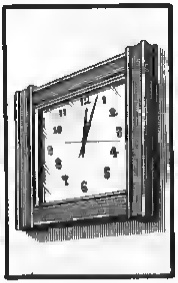
I'LL JUST ADD TWO RULES...

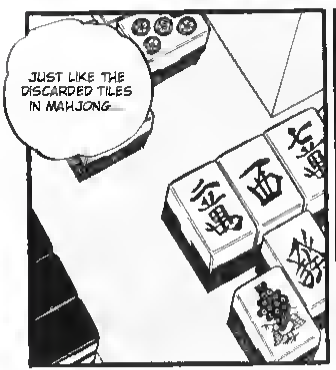

IT'S POKER...

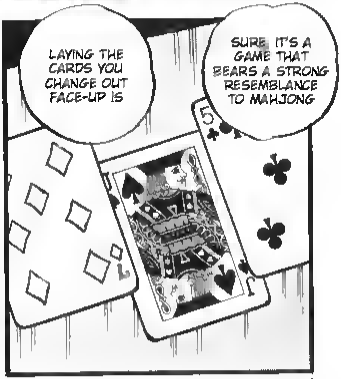

THE FIRST RULE IS THAT YOU HAVE TO LAY THE CARDS YOU CHANGE FACE-UP.
THE OTHER IS THAT THE CARDS CAN'T BE SHUFFLED EACH GAME — WE'LL CONTINUE WITH JUST THE REMAINING CARDS...
THOSE ARE THE ONLY TWO NEW RULES...

I SEE

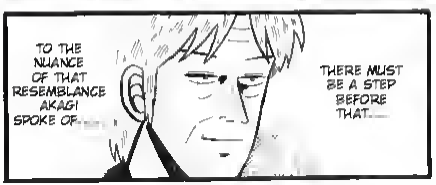
3 CARDS
TWO CARDS




JUST LIKE THE DISCARDED TILES IN MAHJONG


LAYING THE CARDS YOU CHANGE OUT FACE-UP IS
SURE, IT'S A GAME THAT BEARS A STRONG RESEMBLANCE TO MAHJONG

WHICH STRAIGHT OR WHAT SUIT OF FLUSH THEY'RE AIMING FOR—
EVEN IF SOMEONE CHANGES ONE CARD, AIMING FOR A STRAIGHT OR A FLUSH
IT'S POSSIBLE TO GUESS AT THAT MUCH OF IT.
IF THERE ARE ACES AND KINGS IN THE DISCARDED CARDS—
FOR INSTANCE, IF SOMEONE KEEPS TWO CARDS AND CHANGES THREE—
YOU KNOW THAT AT BEST THEY'RE HOLDING A PAIR OF QUEENS
YOU KNOW MORE THAN HALF OF THE CARDS—
BETWEEN THE CARDS THAT WERE LAID FACE-UP IN THE FIRST MATCH AND YOUR OWN HAND IN THE SECOND MATCH
AND THEN... WHEN YOU PLAY WITH THE REMAINING CARDS IN THE SECOND GAME—
AND THE BASIS FOR LOGIC INCREASES
IS THAT WHAT AKAGI IS SAYING RESEMBLES THE FRAMEWORK OF MAHJONG—?
THAT TACTIC—
THAT KIND OF PREDICTION
NO THAT'S NOT IT—!!

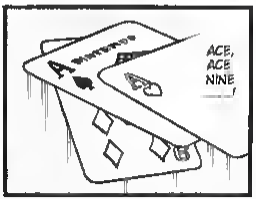

TO THE NUANCE OF THAT RESEMBLANCE AKAGI SPOKE OF—
THERE MUST BE A STEP BEFORE THAT—

FOR INSTANCE— WHEN THE CARDS ARE DEALT
IT'S ALREADY STARTING—

THE OTHER TWO PEOPLE WON'T HAVE VERY MANY HEARTS
IF THERE ARE A LOT OF HEARTS IN YOUR HAND
IF... THERE ARE FOUR KINGS... THE OTHER TWO PEOPLE CAN'T HAVE ANY
IT HAS A FUNDAMENTAL EFFECT ON PROBABILITY
THAT SORT OF PRIOR PREDICTION
BOTH IN CARDS AND IN MAHJONG
BY REASON AND KNOWLEDGE YOU CAN GRASP THE FLOW OF THE ROUND AND THE FLOW OF THE CARDS
SINCE THE THING YOU'RE DEALING WITH IS LIMITED
NATURALLY, CHANCE WOULD BRING THIS ABOUT
THIS PRINCIPLE OF LIMITATION
THAT IS THE FUNDAMENTAL FRAMEWORK OF MAHJONG

..B
BUT... THINKING ABOUT IT NOW, I'M WRONG
AND USING IT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GAME
UNDER-STANDING THAT AS THE BASIS
IS THAT WHAT HE MEANS...?
IF THAT'S WHAT IT IS WHAT DOES AKAGI SENSE...?

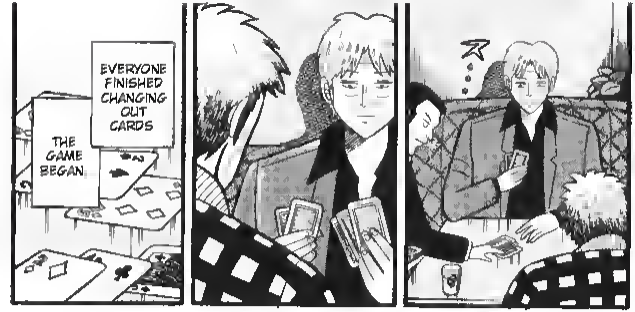
A STRANGE TURN OF EVENTS!
HE DARED TO THROW AWAY A PAIR OF ACES


ACE, ACE NINE...!

WHAT ARE THOSE TWO CARDS...?

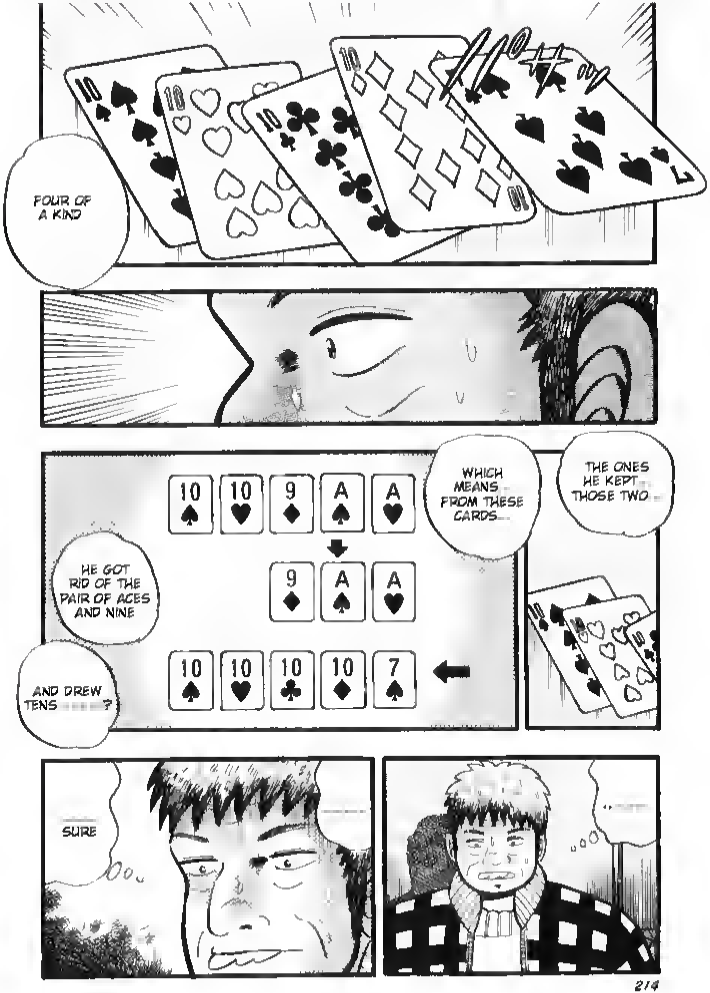
I STILL DON'T KNOW IF IT COULD BE TIED TO A STRAIGHT OR FLUSH, LIKE 3-4-5 OF SPADES. BUT...
IF IT WAS THAT HE'D REMOVE THE ACES AND KEEP THREE...
I DON'T KNOW WHY HE'D KEEP TWO.

WHY NOT AIM FOR THREE-OF-A-KIND AND DRAW ANOTHER?
IT'S THE SECOND GAME, BUT AN ACE NONE HAVE SHOWN UP UNTIL NOW...


EVERYONE FINISHED CHANGING OUT CARDS
THE GAME BEGAN.

WHICH CARDS AKAGI HAD KEPT.
IT DIDN'T MATTER IF I WON OR LOST. I JUST WANTED TO SEE
AT THAT POINT I STILL DIDN'T INTEND TO FOLD.
WELL, I'LL BET TWO TO START
CALL.

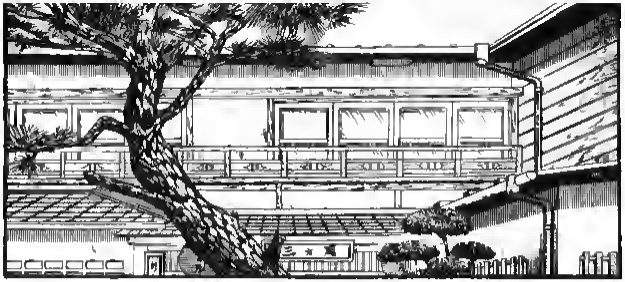
I... HAVE THREE-OF-A-KIND OF THE 2S.....
WE BOTH RAISED UP TO ABOUT 100,000 YEN AND OPENED OUR HANDS.

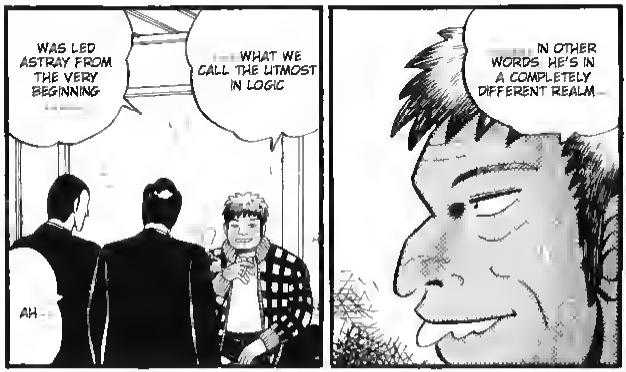

FOUR OF A KIND
10 10 9 A A
9 A A
10 10 10 10 7
HE GOT RID OF THE PAIR OF ACES AND NINE
AND DREW TENS.....?
WHICH MEANS... FROM THESE CARDS...
THE ONES HE KEPT THOSE TWO...
SURE
oooo
..
oooo

WHY NOT KEEP THE PAIR AND GO FOR A FULL HOUSE?
THEN WHY NOT THE ACES?
SINCE I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT...
BUT...
YOU CAN'T SAY IT WAS AN ENTIRELY RECKLESS DECISION...
THERE WAS THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE COULD DRAW TENS FROM THE REMAINING CARDS
IF THAT'S WHAT HE SENSES...
IF THAT'S WHAT IT WAS
THEORETICALLY A CHANGE HE HAD TO MAKE?
WAS IT
BECAUSE THAT WAS AN UNTHINKABLE CHANGE...
HIS SENSES ARE STUNNING

AKAGI'S THOUGHT PROCESS IS WIRED DIFFERENTLY
IT'S SIMPLE
IN SHORT
IN SHORT, THE FLOW OF THE CARDS.
HE ONLY THINKS SO FAR AS TO GUESS THE NEXT CARD HE'LL DRAW
HE TRAMPLED THAT LOGIC
THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION THAT WOULD COME UP THROUGH PROBABILITY
WITHOUT NURTURING TO FRUITION
HE DOES IT THROUGH WHAT HE CALLS HIS SENSE OF THE GAME

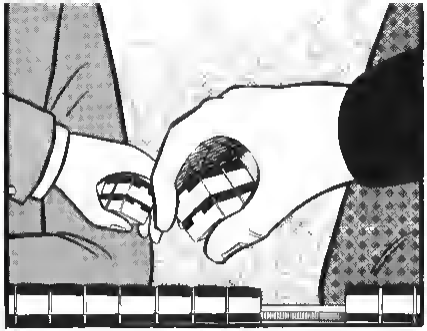
BETRAY LOGIC TOO.
AKAGI SHIGERU'S SENSES

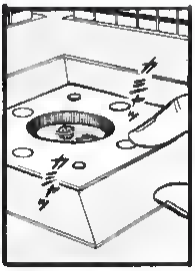


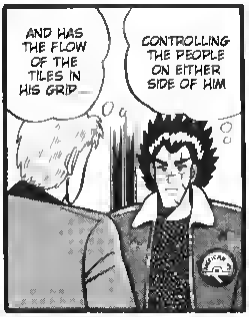

WAS LED ASTRAY FROM THE VERY BEGINNING
WHAT WE CALL THE UTMOST IN LOGIC
AH
IN OTHER WORDS, HE'S IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT REALM

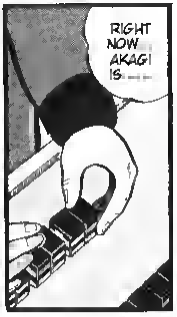
S... SURE
I'LL JUST GO PEEK IN A BIT
DESPITE ALL THAT, I'M INTERESTED IN SEEING HOW TEN'S DOING
WHICH MEANS
THIS IS HIS THIRD ROUND AS THE DEALER.
HE WON WITH TSUMO THIS TURN, TOO...
GOOD...
HOW'S AKAGI DOING?

31ST GAME, SOUTH 3RD ROUND
(AKAGI'S THIRD ROUND AS DEALER)

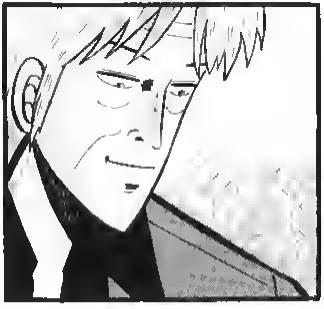








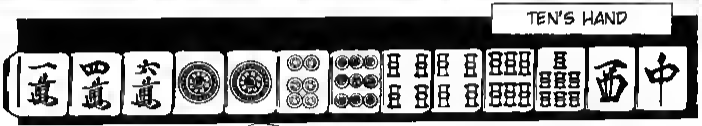
BUT— THERE'LL BE AN OPENING OR SOMETHING I CAN USE THAT WILL LET ME TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OVERWHELMING DOMINATION—

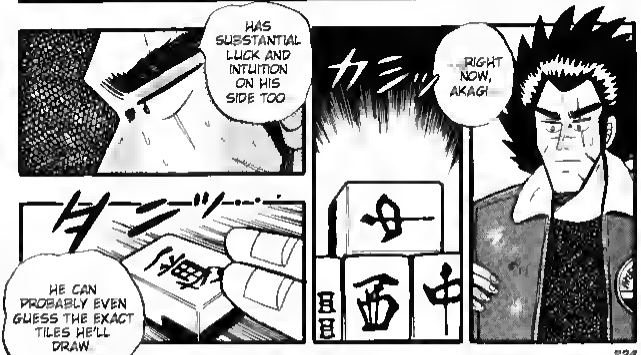


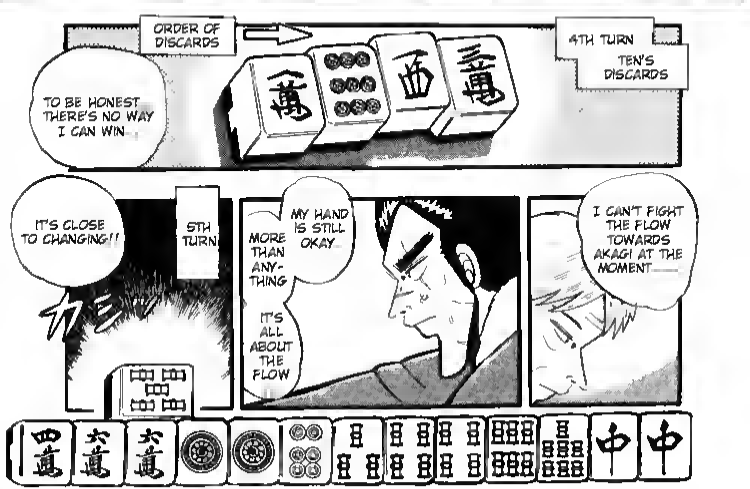
THIS IS THE ROUND ..... !
I'LL STRIKE AT AKAGI'S BLIND SPOT .....
OR BE DEFEATED AGAIN .....!!

CHAPTER
20
THE POWER OF
100
AMERICAN LIFE

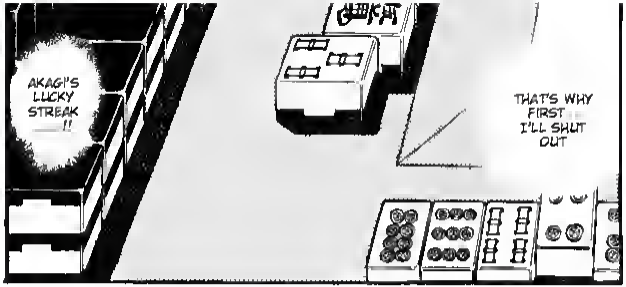
31ST GAME, SOUTH 3RD ROUND
(THIRD CONTINUOUS ROUND WITH AKAGI AS DEALER)

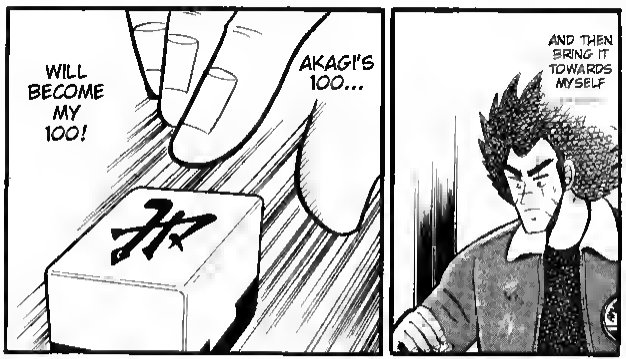

TEN'S HAND


HAS SUBSTANTIAL LUCK AND INTUITION ON HIS SIDE TOO
カミッ
RIGHT NOW, AKAGI
HE CAN PROBABLY EVEN GUESS THE EXACT TILES HE'LL DRAW.


ORDER OF DISCARDS
TO BE HONEST THERE'S NO WAY I CAN WIN...
4TH TURN
TEN'S DISCARDS
IT'S CLOSE TO CHANGING!!
5TH TURN
MY HAND IS STILL OKAY...
MORE THAN ANY-THING
IT'S ALL ABOUT THE FLOW
I CAN'T FIGHT THE FLOW TOWARDS AKAGI AT THE MOMENT...

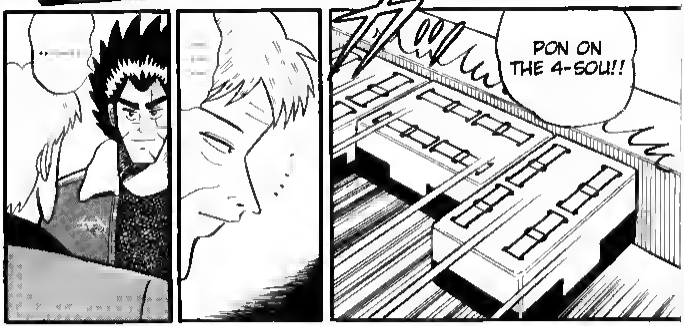
カチ
I'LL IGNORE THIS THREE-WAY WAIT.
FROM THE START
IT HASN'T BEEN ABOUT WINNING BY SPEED TO TENPAI.
IF I DON'T DO ANYTHING HE'LL DRAW IT AND TSUMO WITHIN THREE TURNS
AKAGI'S WINNING TILE IS LIKELY CALLING OUT TO HIM FROM THE WALL
AND HE'LL PROBABLY RICHI FASTER THAN ANYONE
RIGHT NOW AKAGI SHOULD BE GETTING BETTER DRAWS THAN ANYONE
IT'S 100% CERTAIN HE'S CLOSE TO REACHING THAT STATE
YES RIGHT NOW

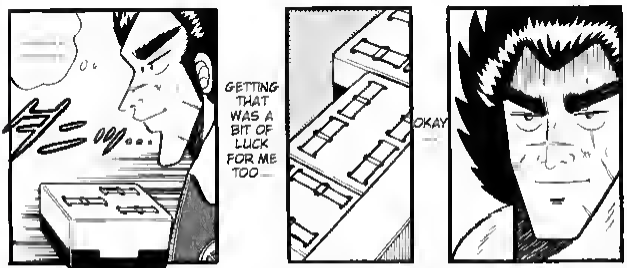

AKAGI'S LUCKY STREAK!!
THAT'S WHY FIRST I'LL SHUT OUT


WILL BECOME MY 100!
AKAGI'S 100...
AND THEN BRING IT TOWARDS MYSELF

MY CHANCE AT VICTORY WILL BE BORN.
THAT TILE
IF I CAN CALL ON
GO FOR IT, AKAGI!
THAT IS... MY ONLY ADVAN-TAGE...
AKAGI'S JUST RIDING THE WAVES... IT WILL BE RELATIVELY EASY FOR HIM TO RICHI!

IF IT GOES THROUGH
8TH TURN
AKAGI DECLARES RICH!

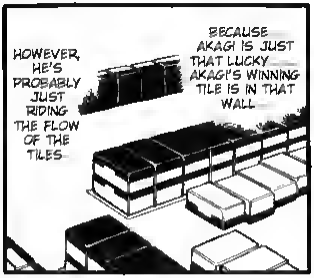

PON ON THE 4-SOU!!


GETTING THAT WAS A BIT OF LUCK FOR ME TOO—
OKAY
PON

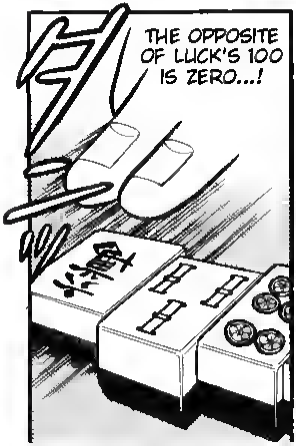
WAS HE AIMING TO DESTROY AKAGI'S CHANCE AT IPPATSU...?
CLEARLY A HOPELESS PON...
CALLING ON THE 4 FROM 3 4 4 5 6?
I DON'T THINK HE'S JUST DOING IT TO CHANGE THE TILES EACH PLAYER DRAWS, BUT...
THE ONLY TIME I'VE FELT LIKE HE IS NARROWING HIS AIM AGAIN IS WHEN HE CALLED ON THE TILE AKAGI DECLARED RICHI WITH...
BUT... SO FAR TEN HAS BEEN MOSTLY IGNORING HIS HAND
BASICALLY AKAGI'S IPPATSU TSUMO!
THIS IS...
カニ
BY CALLING PON, I'VE CHANGED THE TILE AKAGI WILL DRAW
AKAGI WON'T TSUMO SO EASILY...
FIRST OF ALL, WITH THIS...
PON

AT FIRST GLANCE IT LOOKS LIKE IT'LL GO THROUGH BUT...
I CAN'T DISCARD THIS 7-MAN THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN HIS IPPATSU TSUMO...

WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT, ALL 100% OF THE WINNING TILES WILL BE IN THE PART OF THE WALL HE DRAWS FROM...

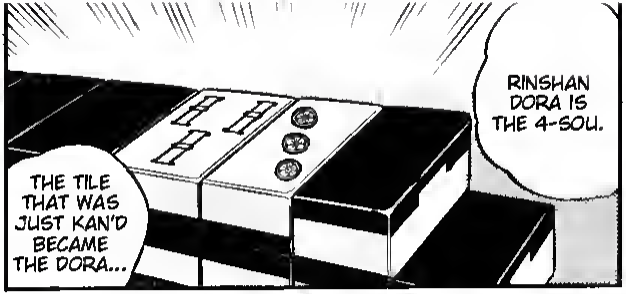

HOWEVER, HE'S PROBABLY JUST RIDING THE FLOW OF THE TILES...
BECAUSE AKAGI IS JUST THAT LUCKY... AKAGI'S WINNING TILE IS IN THAT WALL...

NOT ONLY THIS TILE I HAVE TO WATCH OUT FOR THE TILES I DRAW IN THE THREE TURNS AFTER THIS...
七萬
六萬

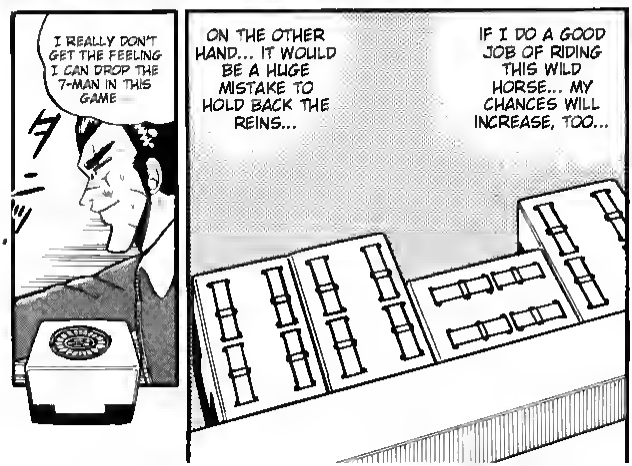

THE OPPOSITE OF LUCK'S 100 IS ZERO...!

AKAGI'S WIN WILL VANISH...
TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, IF I TAKE ALL OF THOSE TILES...

TEN'S DRAW ON THE NEXT TURN
PON
KAN.
BUT AT THIS POINT—
THIS AGAIN CUT THE 7-MAN AND I'LL BE IN TENPAI
THE RINSHAN TILE IS—?
KAN
UH—

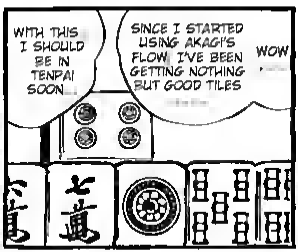

RINSHAN DORA IS THE 4-SOU.
THE TILE THAT WAS JUST KAN'D BECAME THE DORA...

IT'S BEEN AN UNBELIEVABLE TURN OF EVENTS...
AS I FIGURED, AKAGI'S LUCK RUNS HEAVY ON THESE TILES...
I SEE...
4 DORA .....!!


I REALLY DON'T GET THE FEELING I CAN DROP THE 7-MAN IN THIS GAME...
ON THE OTHER HAND... IT WOULD BE A HUGE MISTAKE TO HOLD BACK THE REINS...
IF I DO A GOOD JOB OF RIDING THIS WILD HORSE... MY CHANCES WILL INCREASE, TOO...

ピシッ
TEN'S DRAW ON THE NEXT TURN
KAN

NATURALLY, I CAN'T GET RID OF THE DORA EITHER


WITH THIS I SHOULD BE IN TENPAI SOON...
SINCE I STARTED USING AKAGI'S FLOW, I'VE BEEN GETTING NOTHING BUT GOOD TILES
WOW

THIS TIME THE DORA, THE 4-PIN

カミッ
TEN'S DRAW ON THE NEXT TURN
KAN

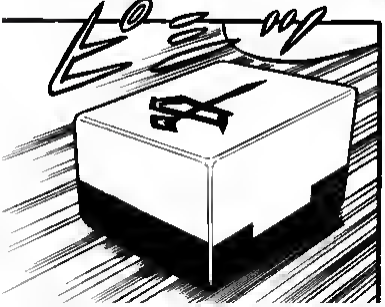
THIS HAND WILL BE DEAD...
IF I GET RID OF THE SAFE TILE, THE 6-MAN...
STILL... SHOULD I GET RID OF THE DORA...?

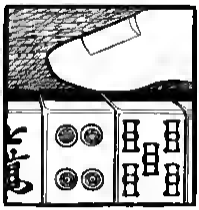
IF I DROP THE DORA I'M IN TENPAI BUT...
THE 7-MAN AGAIN...!!
THIS I CAN'T DISCARD IT...

KAN

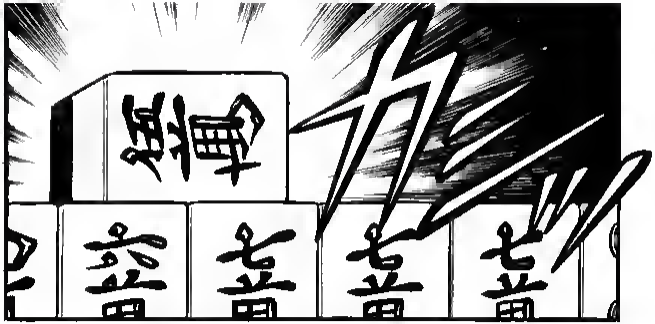
SO AKAGI WON'T WIN BY TSUMO SO EASILY
SINCE I'M GETTING ALL OF AKAGI'S WINNING TILES I'M DRAWING THEM IN
DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY
NO... WAIT CALM DOWN

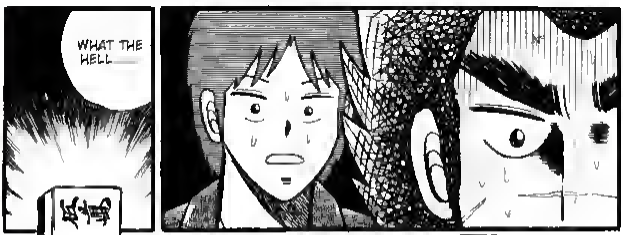
THIS 4-PIN OR THE 7-MAN HE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN IPPATSU WITH
MAYBE... AKAGI'S WINNING TILE IS



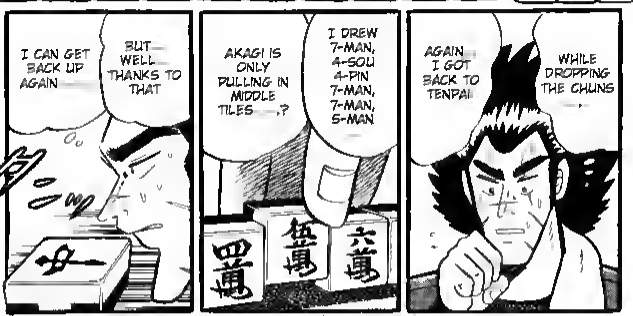

SHIT!
I CAN'T QUITE GET RID OF THIS 4-PIN...

NOW HIS HAND IS BACK TO THE START AGAIN...
IT'S A HARD CHOICE
HE'S GETTING RID OF HIS CLOSED TRIPLET
PLAYING THE CHUN
TEN'S DRAW ON THE NEXT TURN
KAN
BUT IF AKAGI REALLY IS WAITING ON A 7-MAN, HIS LUCK IS STILL GOING STRONG...
WHAT'S GOING ON...
7-MAN AGAIN !!
TEN'S DRAW ON THE NEXT TURN



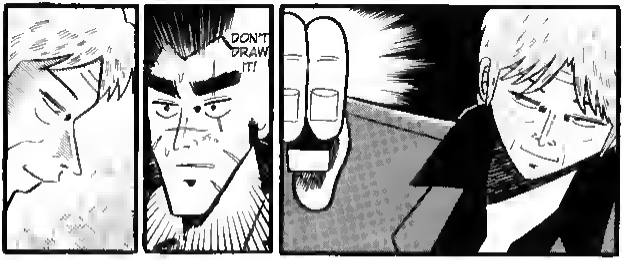

WHAT THE HELL……

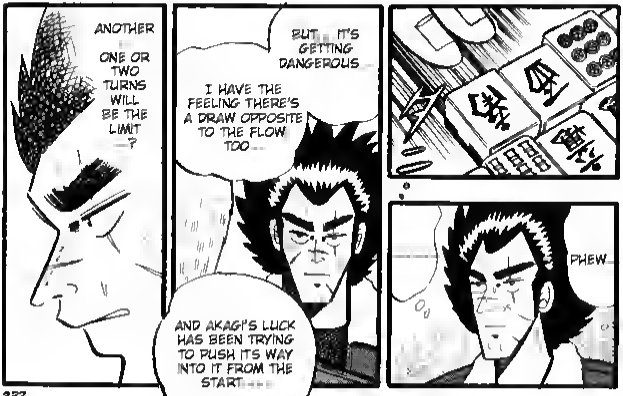
KAN


I CAN GET BACK UP AGAIN……
BUT…… WELL…… THANKS TO THAT
AKAGI IS ONLY PULLING IN MIDDLE TILES……?
I DREW 7-MAN, 4-SOU 4-PIN 7-MAN, 7-MAN, 5-MAN
AGAIN…… I GOT BACK TO TENPAI
WHILE DROPPING THE CHUNS

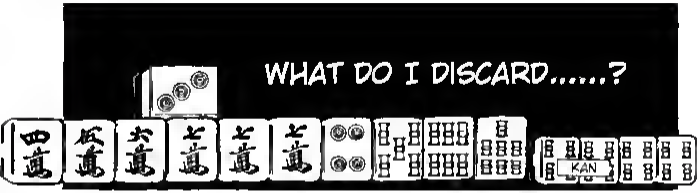
KAN

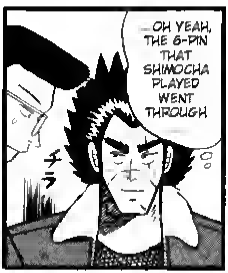
I'M THE ONLY ONE GETTING GOOD DRAWS
AND THAT PUTS AKAGI AT A DISADVANTAGE
...WHICH MEANS

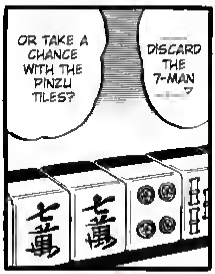

DON'T DRAW IT!


ANOTHER ONE OR TWO TURNS WILL BE THE LIMIT...?
I HAVE THE FEELING THERE'S A DRAW OPPOSITE TO THE FLOW TOO...
BUT... IT'S GETTING DANGEROUS
AND AKAGI'S LUCK HAS BEEN TRYING TO PUSH ITS WAY INTO IT FROM THE START...
PHEW...

TEN'S DRAW ON THE NEXT TURN
WHETHER OR NOT... I'LL DRAW WHAT I NEED... IS THE QUESTION...
NO!
KAN
3-PIN...

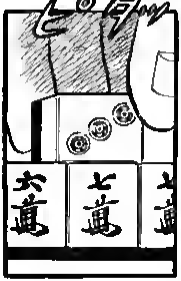

WHAT DO I DISCARD.....?
KAN

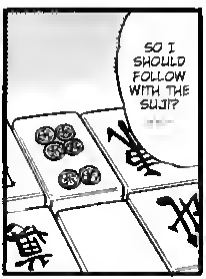

OH YEAH, THE 6-PIN THAT SHIMOCHA PLAYED WENT THROUGH
チラ


OR TAKE A CHANCE WITH THE PINZU TILES?
DISCARD THE 7-MAN

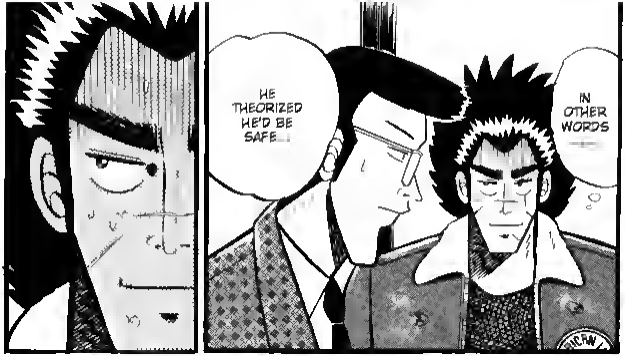
I'M NOT GOING TO DO THAT AFTER COMING THIS FAR
THE 6-MAN, IF I'M FOLDING COMPLETELY BUT...

DID HE GO THROUGH WITH THE 6-PIN...?
WHY...

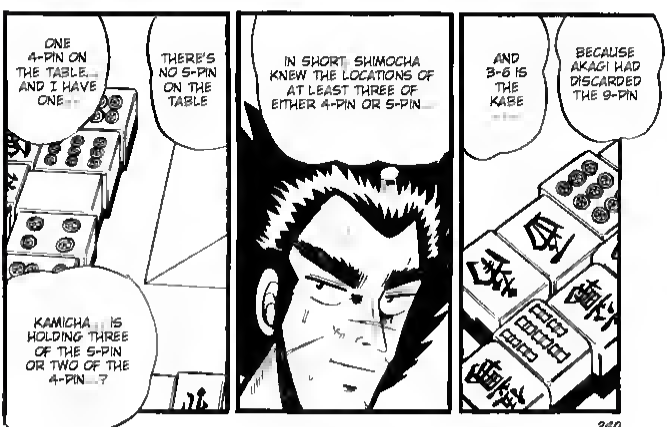

WAIT...

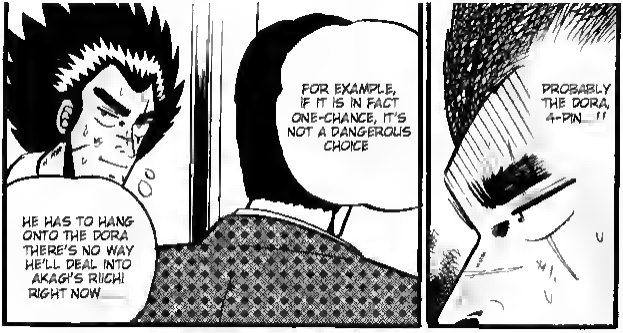

SO I SHOULD FOLLOW WITH THE SUJI?

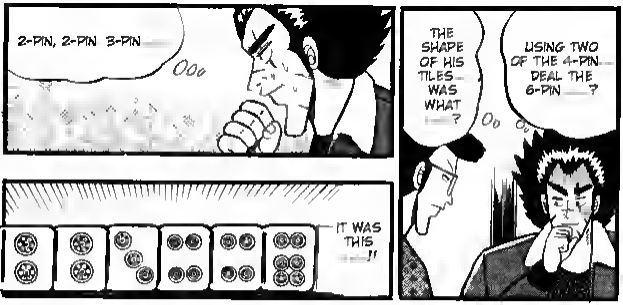
IT'S A FAIRLY DANGEROUS TILE... BUT AT THE TIME, HE DIDN'T SEEM NERVOUS ABOUT IT...

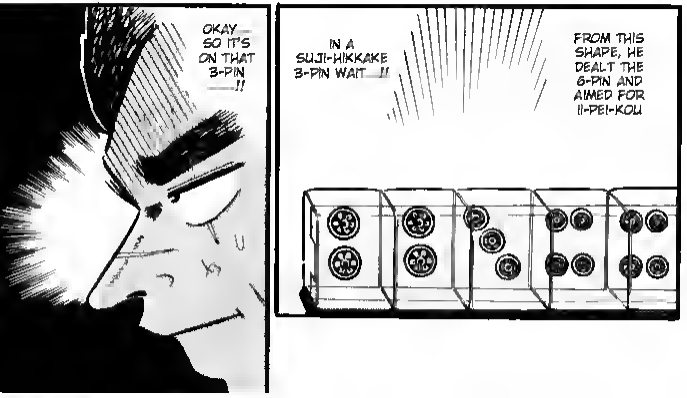

HE THEORIZED HE'D BE SAFE...
IN OTHER WORDS...

KABE...


ONE 4-PIN ON THE TABLE... AND I HAVE ONE...
THERE'S NO 5-PIN ON THE TABLE
KAMICHA... IS HOLDING THREE OF THE 5-PIN OR TWO OF THE 4-PIN...?
IN SHORT, SHIMOCHA KNEW THE LOCATIONS OF AT LEAST THREE OF EITHER 4-PIN OR 5-PIN...
AND 3-6 IS THE KABE...
BECAUSE AKAGI HAD DISCARDED THE 9-PIN

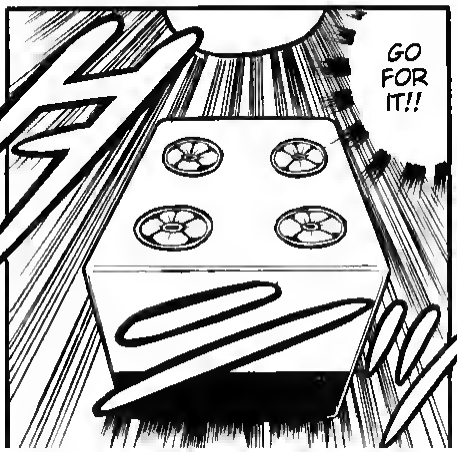

FOR EXAMPLE, IF IT IS IN FACT ONE-CHANCE, IT'S NOT A DANGEROUS CHOICE
HE HAS TO HANG ONTO THE DORA. THERE'S NO WAY HE'LL DEAL INTO AKAGI'S RIICHI RIGHT NOW...
PROBABLY THE DORA, 4-PIN...!!


2-PIN, 2-PIN 3-PIN...
THE SHAPE OF HIS TILES... WAS WHAT...?
USING TWO OF THE 4-PIN... DEAL THE 6-PIN...?
IT WAS THIS...!!


OKAY... SO IT'S ON THAT 3-PIN...!!
IN A SUJI-HIKKAKE 3-PIN WAIT...!!
FROM THIS SHAPE, HE DEALT THE 6-PIN AND AIMED FOR II-PEI-KOU

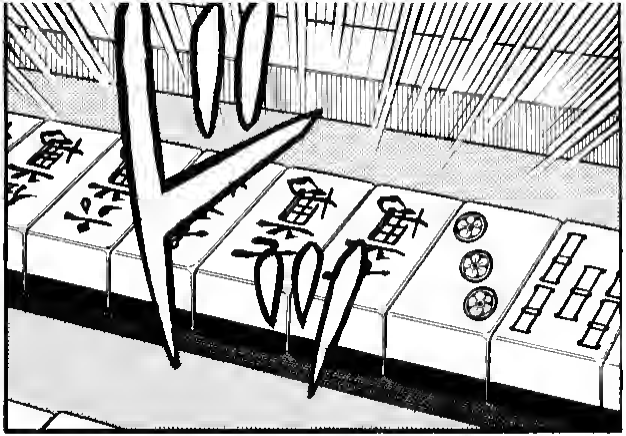
AND DEAL THE 4-PIN!!
INSTEAD... I'LL FLY UNDER HIS RADAR...!!

AND SINCE THE 2-PIN WAIT BELOW IT IS NO-CHANCE, IT'LL COME OUT EASILY...
IF I WAS HIM... I'D CALL ON IT AND HAVE THREE DORA.


GO FOR IT!!

I COULD DEAL INTO HIS HAND...
OF COURSE THE 4-PIN IS DANGEROUS TOWARDS AKAGI TOO...
BUT RIGHT NOW...

PON.
IT WENT THROUGH
KAN



SHIT.
URGH.
RON.

IT'S TRUE.....
AKAGI'S DRAW ON THE NEXT TURN WOULD HAVE BEEN THE 7-MAN.... HE'D HAVE WON.....
カチャ...
カチャ

SINCE THE 4-PIN PASSED, AKAGI'S WAIT COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN ON THE 7-MAN
HEH HEH
IT WAS A GOOD PREDICTION
YOU CATCH ON WELL
7-MAN YOU HAD THREE OF THEM, I SUPPOSE
YOUR DISCARDS WERE GOOD, TOO
DECISIVE DISCARDS
CONTINUING TO DEAL THE CHUN, AND DISCARDING THE DORA WERE BOTH GOOD CHOICES

IT SEEMS LIKE THE WIND IS ON THE VERGE OF CHANGING IN TEN'S FAVOR.
IF I PLAY TOO SLOWLY, I'LL END UP DEAD.
WELL SHOULD I PUT A LITTLE MORE HEART INTO IT?
HEH HEH
LAST ROUND, HUH
WITH THIS TEN YOU'VE NARROWED THE POINT DIFFERENCE TO 9500.
THE WIND IS STILL WAVERING.
IT'D BE RASH TO THINK THAT THE FLOW HAS CHANGED IN MY FAVOR.
NO IN THE END, THIS ROUND WASN'T ABOUT AKAGI DEALING IN.
Ooo
THE REAL GAME BETWEEN AKAGI AND I STARTS NOW.

"The Truth of Mahjong"

by Yamane Yasuaki

Whether mahjong is based on luck or skill is one highly-contested theme. It's true that there are a few who interpret it to be entirely about "luck". But since the number of tiles is limited to 136, there are all kinds of numerical theories.

"Ten" strikes keenly to the heart of the matter. I've noticed it throughout the entire story. What that is, is that luck has been ruled out. A thorough priority has been placed on skill, with that skill centered on numerical theories. It consists of mahjong scenes with those as the basis with intuition and hunches added. Even with those hunches during the game, you can't forget about the theory.

"Ten" captures not only the one game, mahjong, but also seems to show, as if compressed into one small table, the beginning, middle, and conclusion of any kind of game. In other words, the flow of the game of mahjong, the flow of the game between people, and then, the final showdown. These things are systematically described, and once again, hit the mark.

What tiles were discarded? The tiles in that hand are--

The hand is an ideal. The discarded tiles are the sign of the determination to seek out that ideal. In discarded tiles without that determination, there isn't the right feeling of the hand being constructed. In other words, it's identical to a dreary life.

"Ten" dwells upon the determination behind those discards. This is because there is always that ideal there. When mahjong is drawn or written about on a flat piece of paper, whether it's only flat things that can only be two-dimensional or whether it's drawn three-dimensionally, it has that determination and ideal. Fukumoto's literary style, of well-thought-out battles between people, is an idea that puts me to shame.

The other thing that impresses me about Fukumoto's way of drawing are his "fingers". In mahjong, what do you see most often in an anxious shot? It isn't a person's face. It's the tension in a person's fingers. "Fingers" are an angle central to mahjong. In "Ten", the part a lot of effort is put into is the "fingers". You can feel the shaking after a nervous moment. After that, people's faces are shown. That is mahjong.

"Ten" cuts mahjong into a new shape. Truly, it is a work that describes a new era in mahjong comics and can be known as a work that will stand the test of time. I hope for "Ten" to flourish now and in the future.